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THEORY & RESEARCH IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

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What is to be Done in the Aftermath of Proposition 187?

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In late July, Governor Gray Davis and civil rights organizations reached a mediated agreement ending the legal challenges to Proposition 187, effectively killing the California ballot initiative targeting undocumented immigrants. Proposition 187 was approved by 57% of Californians who voted in the 1994 referendum and continues to be a symbol of the racist, anti-immigrant politics widespread in the United States. The deal, if approved by the courts, which seems likely, would permanently bar the enactment of the measure's core provisions, which would have forced the expulsion of tens of thousands of undocumented immigrant children from California public schools and required educators to report them and undocumented parents to federal immigration authorities. The measure would have also prevented undocumented immigrants from receiving social and health care services.

The relatively subdued response to the announcement of Proposition 187's demise is in marked contrast to the tumultuous debate subsequent to its passage in 1994. The garroting of Proposition 187, however, is not indicative of a new era of political or racial tranquility, indeed, the perpetrators are still breathing. That is not to say the struggle against Proposition 187 failed to produce advances, but what has changed since 1994 on the political landscape?

On the positive side, there are reports of a "political awakening" among Latinos, many of whom "saw themselves, regardless of their citizenship status, as being targets. In Los Angeles, with it emerging Latino majority, Proposition 187 inspired one of the largest protest demonstrations ever—activism that eventually translated into growing Latino political participation" (McDonnell, 1999, p. A1). Record numbers of new immigrants have become U.S. citizens and registered to vote. Latino and Asian American voter registration has increased, which potentially translates into more clout at the ballot box, but does not directly challenge the corporate domination of major political parties and the government. The death of Proposition 187 also short-circuited what was likely to be an opportunity for the U.S. Supreme Court to undo more civil rights by revisiting, and perhaps undermining, *Plyer*

v. Doe (1982), which guaranteed “illegal” immigrant children the right to a public education.

In our corner of the world (i.e., CUFA, NCSS, and social studies education), Proposition 187 made it clear to many that politics cannot be separated from the study and practice of education. It also gave us an opportunity to consider how Elie Wiesel’s counsel—“neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim; silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented”—applies to social educators. The debate around the politics of social education resulted in CUFA’s bold move to join with other professional organizations in boycotting California as meeting site, a stance that was later rescinded to allow the organization to meet in the heart of California’s anti-immigrant political movement, Anaheim.¹ CUFA also responded by creating a Social Justice and Diversity committee, which has brought together a committed group of activists members with the goal of diversifying an overwhelmingly White organization, and continuing to highlight the role of social educators in working against injustices. The Commission on Social Justice in Teacher Education, co-sponsored by the Association of Teacher Educators and NCSS, is another important advance.

These debates also spawned questions that are reshaping what it means to research and teach social education: How can we teach against racism, national chauvinism and sexism in an increasingly authoritarian and undemocratic society? How can we gain enough real power to keep our ideals and still teach—or learn? Whose interests shall school serve in a society that is ever more unequal? These are questions that the Rouge Forum, Whole Schooling Consortium, and other groups are using to frame efforts to learn about equality, democracy, and social justice as they simultaneously struggle to bring into practice present understandings of what they are. The primary challenge for this new breed of social educators is to build a caring inclusive community that understands an injury to one is an injury to all, while at the same time, decisively confronting a sometimes ruthless opposition.

Which brings us to the downside of the aftermath of Proposition 187. While Proposition 187 was bottled up in court, the measure’s provisions inspired Congress to include many bans on immigrant aid as part of welfare “reform” in 1996, including making undocumented immigrants ineligible for most non-emergency public aid—a key component of Proposition 187 (McDonnell, 1999).

The “Save Our State” campaign emerged in the suburbs of Los Angeles and Orange County, California and led to the creation of Proposition 187 successfully tapping into (and fueling) unease among Whites and the middle class as California has undergone a dramatic demographic shift. The racist and classist perspectives undergirding the success of Proposition 187 are still strong. Public opinion polls

show the same level of support for Proposition 187 now as in 1994 and analysts report the demise of Proposition 187 has embittered advocates of anti-immigrant measures. "[Advocates] are more perturbed now than before," and "the court-condoned undoing of Proposition 187 gives them yet one more reason to be mad" (McDermott, 1999).

Roberta Gilliam, described by the *Los Angeles Times* as an activist in Ross Perot's 1992 presidential run and a "foot soldier" in the pro-Proposition 187 campaign, calls the demographic shifts in California "an invasion" and suggests the solution is to: "Shoot 'em. Shoot illegals at the border. If people knew they were going to get shot dead they wouldn't come" (McDermott, 1999, p. A-1). Ron Prince, the original proponent of Proposition 187, recently met with Gilliam and other Perotists briefing them on a likely court challenge to the agreement killing the measure and plans for a new initiative.

Not every supporter of anti-immigrant measures advocates murdering undocumented immigrants. The Anaheim Union High School District board recently approved a measure demanding the U.S. government collect money from the nations of origin of undocumented immigrants attending Anaheim schools. According to Board Trustee Robert Stewart the resolution is a purely financial matter, not motivated by racism (Manfredi, 1999).

As the news of Proposition 187's demise broke, a poll of 18-29 year-olds views on race relations indicates many young Americans are comfortable with the notion of a segregated society (Racial survey, 1999). Over 52 % of respondents agreed it is all right for the races to be separate as long as everyone has the same opportunities (nearly, 60% of African Americans in the same age-group disagreed). The poll found the vast majority (77.4%) of these young people rate race relations as being fair or poor and not improving. While respondents supported multicultural education and the notion of "equal opportunity," they also reported frequent exposure to examples of racism. By small, but consistent margins, respondents were less likely to describe African Americans as equally intelligent, peaceful, and hardworking as Whites.

This news comes at a time when many school districts are dismantling integration efforts and schools are increasingly segregated (Karlin, 1999; Ross, 1999). The new de facto racial segregation is no less harmful than Jim Crow, though apparently more widely accepted.²

What is to be done in the aftermath of Proposition 187? I see no alternative to a concerted action to make social education a movement the primary aim of which is combating racism, sexism, classism and national chauvinism. To do anything less is to shirk our duty as social educators to contribute to the creation of democracy in society and schools.

Notes

¹ For more on CUFA's response to Proposition 187, see: Cornbleth, 1998; Fleury, 1998; Gibson, 1998; Hursh, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1998; "More on CUFA's resolution," 1997; Ross, 1997, 1998.

² In New York, the 35th state to enact charter schools legislation, the first three charter schools will enroll African American students almost exclusively. The charter school in Albany, New Covenant School, will have a student body of 550, 90% of whom are African American, when it opens this fall. The grade K-5 school, is sponsored by the Urban League of Northeastern New York.

The local media and supporters of the charter school have declared racial segregation in schools a non-issue (see Karlin, 1999). There is no doubt that many public schools are failing students of color. The increasing racial isolation that results from segregated schools, however, is a formula for educational and social disaster for us all, rather than salvation for ill-served students, whether they be poor or non-white.

It should be noted that the curriculum of the New Covenant School, according to the interim-principal, who is an executive with the Boston-based for-profit corporation hired to run the school, will focus on traditional classics, including *Tom Sawyer*, Homer's *Odyssey*, and "'character education,' meaning subjects ranging from table manners to William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*." The school will use Direct Instruction, a scripted format in which teachers engage their students in numerous call-and-response drills to learn the fundamentals of reading, math, social studies, and English.

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National Curriculum Standards and Social Studies Education: Dewey, Freire, Foucault, and the Construction of a Radical Critique¹

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Abstract

In this paper the author examines the issue of national curriculum standards within the context of social studies education. First, he explores both the recent "conservative"-/liberal" consensus in favor of (at least) the idea(l) of national curriculum standards and the nascent opposition movements to national curriculum standards growing within both the pedagogical/political Left and the pedagogical/political Right. Second, focusing on the perspective of the radical Left—the author's own position as well as an increasingly legitimate one among social educators generally—he appropriates the work of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Michel Foucault as (1) significant and meaningful with respect to reconstructing and interpreting the origins, development, and evolution of a/the radical Left critique; and (2) a dynamic source of guidance and direction for critical social educators now working to advance, strengthen, and expand it. Here, the author provides a "reading" of the recent work of E. Wayne Ross as a "case study" of this relationship between Dewey, Freire, and Foucault and contemporary critical social studies scholarship. Lastly, the author suggests and considers implications of his analysis for today's social educators, specifically those implications relevant to current understandings of pedagogical theory, research, and practice.

What chiefly makes our schools unfair...is that some students are learning less than others...because of inherent shortcomings in curricular organization. A systematic failure to teach all children the knowledge they need in order to understand what the next grade has to offer is *the* major source of avoidable injustice in our schools. (Hirsch, 1996, p. 25)

I would say there is...false consciousness still exhibited today....Educational goals...are goals set *for* students. It is in this "for" that the machinations of power can be discerned. Whether the "for" is an "on behalf of," a "for the benefit of," or even an "instead of," the "for" always re-

veals an imbalance. Some people are in a position to set goals. Some are not....I propose that Freire's existential critique of the "banking approach"...is, in essence, a Nietzschean critique of the power relations hidden behind educational goal setting. (Bingham, 1998, p. 239)

For US educators, as well as other individuals and groups with an interest in contemporary schooling, the issue of creating and implementing national curriculum standards represents one of today's most heated, complex, political, and pedagogically-defining debates. Of course, positions vary enormously and indicate a fluid and dynamic multiplicity rather than simply or simplistically a bipolar "for" or "against." Indeed, specific perspectives are quite intricate, with each produced and reproduced according to an array of hierarchical and asymmetrical relations of power, created locally as well as structurally, that exist grounded in a series of contingent and complicated interactions, for example those situated among understandings of identity, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and culture. Ultimately, national curriculum standards—as both an issue and a collection of diverse, hybridized viewpoints—pose a significant, perplexing challenge to the very meaning of American public schools.

One problem is that the label "curriculum standards" refers to many things. Banks (1998), for example, prefers the name "content standards" which she defines as "provid[ing] a structure to guide curriculum and instruction by framing core academic content areas in terms of what and how teachers should teach and what students should know and be able to do" (p. 87). Tucker and Coddling (1998) use content standards to mean "performance descriptions" and refer readers to their definition of "*performance standards*," (p. 315) identified as "Written standards consisting of performance descriptions....[or] succinct narrative statement[s] of what students are expected to know and be able to do that describe[] what is most essential to learn in each discipline and is confined to things that can actually be assessed..." (p. 318). The National Council for the Social Studies (Curriculum Standards Task Force, 1994), however, does accept the designation "curriculum standards," and defines "**curriculum standard** [bold in the original]" as "a statement of what should occur programmatically in the formal schooling process; [further,] it provides a guiding vision of content and purpose" (p. 14). Such standards suggest "curriculum experiences" that "should enable students to exhibit the knowledge, skills, scholarly perspectives, and commitments to American democratic ideals identified in the [Task Force's] **performance expectations** [bold in the original]" (p. 14).

For the purposes of this paper, I shall use the terms *curriculum standards* and *content standards* synonymously, and assume them to

represent any effort on the part of some formally sanctioned body to establish in an academic or disciplinary area subject matter, content, or content guidelines against which the performance of teachers and students will be measured and/or evaluated. In short, national curriculum standards are defined here as authoritative policies seeking to prescribe curriculum or content, that is to determine and limit what teachers can and should teach and what students can and should learn, for the entire country. In addition, generally, national curriculum standards imply some means of assessment by which teacher and student achievement or performance can be gauged.

To perceive the present interest in national curriculum standards one need only consult the popular press or the general educational literature (e.g., Banks, 1998; Donmoyer, 1998; Harris & Baker, 1997; Kozol, Wells, Delpit, Rose, Fruchter, Kohl, Meier, & Cole, 1997; Levin, 1998; Noll, 1997; Schultz, 1997; Thomas, 1998; Tucker & Codding, 1998; Willis, 1997; Wolf, 1998). Both are rife with examples. What recent accounts reveal, however, is at least some ambiguity (if not confusion) surrounding the essential concerns of need, establishment, import, and impact. For while certain attempts toward national curriculum standards *appear* successful, others seem much more problematic. The work of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (1989, 1991), for example, earned generally widespread praise, while the similar work of the National Center for History in the Schools (1994a, 1994b) met extensive criticism. That these examples represent qualitatively different yet related undertakings is clear. Still, they do provide an interesting contrast as well as significant insights into the "nature" and complexity of mathematics and social studies. On the other hand, they indicate the degree of uncertainty—a well-intentioned chaos—inherent in the national curriculum standards debate.

At least some of this chaos or confusion reflects the inability or unwillingness of effectiveness/efficiency-minded policymakers (in education as well as business and government) to ask and take seriously the "difficult questions," particular those connected to concerns of (underlying) purpose (e.g., What is/should be the purpose of education [see, e.g., Postman, 1995;Sizer, 1996]? Why should we or should we not have national curriculum standards?) and to the complex issues of social justice, equality, freedom, identity, and democracy (e.g., Whose standards? To what ends? To what extent do or would national curriculum standards promote a public schooling that is conforming, normative, and disciplinary as opposed to one that is freeing, critical, and emancipatory? In what ways might national curriculum standards work to privilege a single, dominant perspective when in fact authentic curriculum and instruction and teaching and learning comprise a multitude of experiences and knowledges?). Ultimately, perhaps, and most fundamentally, the issue concerns the very

nature and meaning of terms such as "common good," "unity," and "diversity." It is, therefore, one of epistemology, ontology, and ethics. Moreover, as I understand the debate, these concerns are especially crucial to contemporary social studies educators to the extent that, historically, they have assumed the primary responsibility for "citizenship" and "democratic" education. Although still uncertain and chaotic, ultimately the debate over national curriculum standards is unavoidable; it challenges all caring educators—all of *us*—to become meaningfully and critically engaged.

The purposes of this paper are to: (1) examine the "contemporary scene" with respect to the national curriculum standards debate and the growing pro-standards "conservative"-"liberal" consensus; (2) explore the evolving radical Left critique against national curriculum standards and to draw from the works of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault insights into how such a critique developed and how it might be expanded and strengthened; (3) analyze Ross's (1996) recent article "Diverting Democracy" as a case study of the radical critique and its origins and evolution (i.e., in the works of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault); and (4) suggest implications of this critique for contemporary social studies education in terms of theory, research, and classroom practice. In effect, I argue that the imposition of national curriculum standards for the social studies should be opposed, that the radical Left critique should be acknowledged as legitimate in that it offers the social studies an important and unique (though often ignored) perspective, and that efforts toward national curriculum standards—in terms both of policy and specific practices—pose significant dangers with respect to social justice, freedom, equality, identity, diversity, and democracy—dangers that threaten the very *raison d'être* of contemporary social studies education.

The Contemporary Scene: Consensus and Opposition

Although political/pedagogical liberals and political/pedagogical conservatives maintain, obviously, diverse positions, recently an alliance or consensus has formed in which both liberals and conservatives agree on (at least) the relative utility and goodness of national curriculum standards as an *idea(l)*. While they differ in beliefs, rationales, and details, contemporary liberals and conservatives both support national curriculum standards as one component of meaningful education reform.²

The conservative view, at least in its post-Reagan, post-*A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) form, can be characterized by the attempt to merge two competing and fundamentally important mindsets or goals, consolidating them into a singularly unstable and uniquely discordant (in some ways illogical)

mixture. The first is Reagan's "new federalism," a policy designed to "restore" to the individual states their "original," "intended," and "rightful" prominence in the always shifting balance of governmental power. From this view, representing a legacy passed down from Barry Goldwater and even earlier conservatives, the national government has (over time) acquired or robbed from the states their particular prerogatives and responsibilities, a situation resulting in government by "tax and spend" liberalism, waste and inefficiency, and unwarranted presidential and Congressional "intrusions" into matters that are "properly" left up to individuals, local communities, and states. With respect to education, the implications of this "new" federalism include reducing Washington's involvement with public schooling (a state power), and "returning" control over it to the jurisdiction and authority of the states, especially in terms of "regulation" and "financial support." (Recall here that one component of this policy was Reagan's [e.g., 1984] expressed objective of eliminating the national Department of Education.)³

The second element of the conservative position, a direct effect of *A Nation at Risk* although traceable to earlier "back-to-basics" initiatives, rests on the belief that US economic (and therefore political) competitiveness depends on the "academic effectiveness" of American public schools, specifically with respect to the "basics" of shared factual disciplinary knowledge and the "functional skills" of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Given the concurrent belief that today's public schools are not achieving success—measured against other industrialized nations—and that they are thus ineffective and pose a clear threat to the economic health of the US, the conservative argument favors a national back-to-basics curriculum supported by national and international achievement/assessment exams. *Theoretically*, this system would increase achievement levels and thereby enhance the ability of American corporations to compete successfully within the global marketplace.⁴

The conservative viewpoint, maintaining as it does both essential elements, presents a delicate and fragile balancing act between two seemingly incommensurable goals. On the one hand it seeks a reduction of federal involvement in public education (and with the "Republican Revolution" of 1994 arguably pursues policies detrimental to its well-being), while on the other it aspires to create and impose a back-to-basics system of national curriculum and national testing. As President Reagan (1984) stated in response to a reporter's question about *A Nation at Risk*:

We've talked about [increased spending on education...providing there would not be any increase in Federal administration of those funds. We think there is a

parallel between the Federal involvement in education and the decline in quality over recent years. What is more needed than just throwing money at education—we're right now spending more money than any other country in the world; we're spending \$215 billion on education in this country. We think what has happened is—well, the report speaks for itself, that we have let up, we are not actually taking the students to the limits of their ability. We think we need more required courses. This is what the [National Commission on Educational Excellence] has come up with. (p. 588)

Essentially, Reagan called for both decreased federal involvement and increased federal requirements.

Contemporary conservative support for national curriculum standards is best represented by the work of authors such as E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1996, 1998) and Diane Ravitch (1995; Ravitch & Finn, 1987). Their approach emphasizes the importance of shared content—basic skills, facts, Western culture—as necessary for improving US school performance and achievement, especially as indicated via national and international assessments. They handle the apparent contradiction between federal *divestment* and federal *direction* by downplaying the notion of *federal* as secondary to that of *national*. By that they mean consensus (even voluntary), broad, and “nonpartisan” as opposed to “political,” “ideological,” and impositional; they seek local and state control as well as federal leadership and guidance. They deemphasize such hallmark conservative initiatives as vouchers as ultimately unproductive in the absence of a system of common content and assessment standards. While they do recognize the importance and necessity of educational spending, they do so only insofar as increased spending might complement locally mandated, internationally measured standards; otherwise, it is wasteful.⁵ For both Hirsch and Ravitch, national curriculum standards imply some “core” of common, traditionally Western, factual content and skills coupled with standardized (multiple choice and/or performance-based) assessments as essential indicators of achievement, effectiveness, and proficiency. As Hirsch (1998) argues, “Our aim...is not to claim that the content we recommend is better than some other well-thought-out core....Nor is it our aim to specify *everything* that American schoolchildren should learn....Rather our point is that a core of shared knowledge, grade by grade, is needed to achieve excellence and fairness in elementary education” (p. 138). Further, as he suggests in *The Schools We Need* (Hirsch, 1996), he views this core as essential to the promotion of economic justice and equality of individual opportunity. Similarly, Ravitch (1995) summarizes her case by stating that:

1. *Standards can improve achievement by clearly defining what is to be taught and what kind of performance is expected;*
 2. *Standards (national, state, and local) are necessary for equality of opportunity;*
 3. *National standards provide a valuable coordinating function [by providing coherence with respect to the various aspects of education];*
 4. *There is no reason to have different standards in different states, especially in mathematics and science, when well-developed international standards have already been developed;*
 5. *Standards and assessments provide consumer protection by supplying accurate information to students and parents; [and]*
 6. *Standards and assessments serve as an important signaling device to students, parents, teachers, employers, and colleges.*
- (pp. 25-27)

Whereas the conservative view draws from Reagan's new federalism and the economic imperatives of effectiveness and achievement delineated in *A Nation at Risk*, the contemporary liberal perspective claims roots in both Deweyan educational philosophy and recent constructions of multiculturalism/multicultural education (as well as, to a lesser extent, in left-liberal Democratic positions on issues such as civil rights, equality, economics, civil liberties, and social welfare—in today's language, "economic and social liberalism"). It is perhaps best represented (at least in the social studies) by the work of national professional organizations and commissions such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)⁶ and the National Commission on History in the Schools (NCHS). As a response to the *America 2000* (Department of Education, 1991) initiative, liberal efforts attempt to prevent the establishment of national curriculum standards by nonprofessionals (especially those from government and business); that is, they seek to reduce or eliminate the potential power of noneducators. Essentially reactive, the view is that *if* curriculum standards are inevitable, then it is better to be involved than not involved. As Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn (1997) recount in their history of the work of the National History Standards Project:

...the simple fact [was] that the train was leaving the station. History standards were clearly on the country's agenda...The matter boiled down to who would write them. Those who were at first reluctant about the wisdom of this enterprise soon decided that they might com-

promise their own best interests if they failed to join in. If the cards were being dealt, why would historians or social studies educators not want seats around the big table? (p. 158)⁷

Liberal initiatives (e.g., NCHS, 1994a, 1994b; NCSS Curriculum Standards Task Force, 1994) often strive to create a general curriculum "framework," guidelines as opposed to a body of prespecified content, constructed around some set of broad-based educational "goals" or subject matter "themes." In many instances, these aim to promote diversity, multiculturalism, inclusiveness over exclusiveness, nontraditional/"authentic" pedagogies (e.g., hands-on learning, performance assessment, problem solving, cooperative/collaborative learning), and a concern for equality, cultural pluralism, and social justice. These motives clearly undergird such examples as those developed by the NCHS (1994a, 1994b) and the NCSS Curriculum Standards Task Force (1994).

In *History on Trial*, Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn (1997) describe the efforts of the NCHS and others to develop US and world history curriculum standards (see also Banks, 1998, for supportive commentary on the "content standards" work of the NCHS). As liberals, they relate their own experiences with the National History Standards Project working in support of a history that is inclusive, diverse, multicultural, global, and analytic/interpretive as well as ("merely") factual. Frequently, according to their account, supporters of these positions worked in opposition to conservatives (e.g., Chester Finn) who advocated a "unified" version of US history, a US and "world" history grounded in "Western Civ," and an emphasis on historical "facts" over their interpretation and analysis. Yet here, according to Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, the work of the Commission simply reflected a majority of its members' vision of good history *teaching*, instruction that "should give students opportunities to examine the historical record for themselves, raise questions about it, and marshal evidence in support of their answers" (p. 175). In addition, it:

should encourage pupils to reflect on the interpretive nature of history, analyze and compare historians' competing views, and thereby hone skills of critical judgment. It should equip students with a solid knowledge base of information, but also demonstrate that facts are only the raw material of historical understanding. (p. 176)

In *Expectations of Excellence*, a second example of the liberal approach, the NCSS Curriculum Standards Task Force (1994) begins with a definition of the social studies designed to challenge the tradi-

tional/conservative notions of a Western Eurocentric, history-oriented, and fact-based curriculum.⁸ According to the Task Force:

Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon [many] disciplines....The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (p. 3)

Curriculum standards, then, should (and in the Task Force's view *Expectations of Excellence* does):

provide criteria for making decisions as curriculum planners and teachers address such issues as why teach social studies, what to include in the curriculum, how to teach it well to all students, and how to assess whether or not students are able to apply what they have learned. (p. 13)

"To achieve the vision of social studies," the Task Force continues, "we must ensure that students become intimately acquainted with scholarship, artisanship, leadership, and citizenship" (p. 5). This demands a social education aimed toward: (1) "supporting the common good"; (2) "adopting common and multiple perspectives"; and (3) "applying knowledge, skills, and values to civic action" (pp. 5-7). These, in turn, involve a commitment to certain "principles of powerful teaching and learning" (p. 11) such as instruction that is "meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active" (pp. 11-12). What these two examples illustrate with respect to the national curriculum standards debate is the overarching liberal emphasis on issues such as inclusion, diversity, multiculturalism, and "nontraditional" modes of pedagogy, namely those involving more than simply the acquisition of information as well as those aimed at the active analysis, interpretation, and application of information to the specific demands of effective citizenship and of democratic and individual/social problem solving. More importantly, though, these examples suggest the extent to which, and conditions around which, a conservative-liberal consensus has formed.

Both liberals and conservatives see national curriculum standards (in general as well as specifically for the social studies) as necessary for productive public school reform. They agree that today's students do not "know enough," that they possess too little knowledge (whether defined as facts, skills, understandings, or something else), and that

curriculum standards can promote wider and deeper levels of achievement and performance. Further, they concur that without such a system of standards American students and their schools will continue to “lag behind” those of other industrialized countries. Liberals and conservatives each envision a (potentially *voluntary*) structure built upon proactive federal leadership and guidance (and *perhaps* funding) but under the ultimate control of states and communities. Lastly, both champion national curriculum standards as conducive to and consistent with the advancement of equal educational opportunity.

Recently, however, in light of this consensus, opposition has grown within both the Left and the Right, especially “As the possibility of creating national standards and assessments came closer to reality in the early 1990s” (Ravitch, 1995, p. 19). Conservative standards supporter Diane Ravitch (1995) suggests that “The critics range from conservatives, who have always opposed expansion of the federal role in education, to [left-leaning] liberals, who fear that meaningful standards will cause poor children to fail or drop out...” (pp. 18-19). Gittell (1998), a cautious liberal supporter of national standards, writes that “strong opposition to... standards persists and continues to come from both the right and the left” (p. 143). From her perspective, such opposition points to “the weakness of a federal strategy for educational reform that deviates from our national commitment to educational equity” (p. 143).

According to Ravitch (1995), the criticisms are and have been:

1. *National standards will be minimal, reduced to the lowest common denominator, especially if they are controlled by a federal agency;*
2. *The government might impose controversial values and opinions;*
3. *National standards based on traditional subject matter disciplines such as mathematics, science, and history will narrow the curriculum;*
4. *National testing will harm children and will distort priorities in the classroom;*
5. *National standards and national tests will do nothing to help poor inner-city schools;*
6. *National standards and assessments will not expand equality of opportunity;*
7. *National standards and assessments will not improve achievement because most teachers will ignore them and do what they have always done;*
8. *The failure of national standards and testing will undermine faith in public education and pave the way for privatization of education; [and]*

9. *National standards and assessments will accomplish little by themselves....* (pp. 18-25)

For Gittell (1998), "Opposition to national standards comes from people with a variety of points of view" (p. 143). She identifies people who:

1. honor and cherish the tradition of local control of education, particularly at the school district level;
2. give priority to equity and equitable financing of education;
3. focus on the role of the states;
4. see American federalism as the most effective means of retaining a decentralized and democratic political system;
5. value and encourage diversity in all aspects of American society;
6. question the value of the extensive testing in American schools;
7. lead [local] school reform efforts;
8. do not think that foreign school systems are exemplary models of education; and/or
9. worked on the national history curriculum or the New York social studies proposal, and have faced the wrath of colleagues who disagree with their suggested standards. (pp. 143-144)

What these viewpoints share are the understandings that opposition positions (1) represent the entire range of political and pedagogical perspectives (i.e., from the far Left to the far Right), (2) are at least somewhat legitimate and thus deserve to be taken seriously, and (3) can be addressed to their proponents' satisfaction. Both Ravitch and Gittell believe that these questions, doubts, and challenges can be worked out within the consensus framework. Neither indicates a real willingness to reconsider the essential position of national curriculum standards themselves.

It is to one such reconsideration that I now turn, namely the antistandards position of the radical Left. Although I recognize the parallel existence of antistandards Right-wing criticism, its concerns are beyond the scope of this study. This is for four principal reasons. First, the far Right has offered little opposition to national curriculum standards in either the general educational or the social studies literature. Second, its supporters apparently have (with few exceptions) coalesced around the broader conservative-liberal consensus. Third, the radical Left has in a sense "split off" from educational liberalism to such an extent as to become a legitimate force of its own—some-

thing the far Right has not done with respect to educational conservatism (at least on the issue of standards). Fourth, there is some tentative evidence that social studies teachers are more radical and Left-leaning than previously thought (Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, & Sullivan, 1997; Vinson, 1998). As I read the debate, the future of national curriculum standards lay in the arguments among conservative supporters (e.g., Hirsch), liberal supporters (e.g., the NCHS and the NCSS), and radical dissenters (e.g., Apple, 1993, 1996), and in their eventual yet unpredictable resolutions.

Building a Radical Critique: Dewey, Freire, Foucault

The radical Left critique of national curriculum standards is perhaps best represented today in the work of "critical pedagogues" such as Michael Apple (1993, 1996; Vinson & Dunbar, in press) and others whose views build from a deep concern with power, representation, voice, social justice, diversity, democracy, and equality. For Apple (1996), a national curriculum necessitates "[a] decision to define some groups' knowledge as the most legitimate, as official knowledge [so powerful that] other groups' knowledge hardly sees the light of day" (p. 22). His view is that national curriculum standards will benefit most those who are already society's most powerful, and that their effects will be truly damaging to those who already have the most to lose..." (p. 24). As externally imposed conditions, they would attempt to "invent" a "uniform culture [that] never truly existed in the United States" (p. 34), an unjust status quo toward which all students would be expected—even overtly or covertly *forced*—to conform. In sum, Apple maintains that national curriculum standards promote: (1) a schooling that is separated from the lives of students; (2) an antidemocratic imposition of content; (3) oppression; and (4) the reproduction of unequal, hegemonic, and hierarchical relations of power.

As I argue, such a radical Left critique evolved out of the earlier work of thinkers such as Dewey, Freire, and Foucault, theorists who, in effect, made positions such as Apple's possible. My purpose here is to examine their works for insights into the construction and expansion of a radical critique of national curriculum standards and to connect certain aspects of their writings to today's Leftist views. In appropriating elements of their works I seek to develop the theoretical foundations upon which a more sophisticated critical position might be developed, strengthened, and applied.

Dewey: Experience & Democracy

In my opinion, Dewey would oppose adamantly the imposition of national curriculum standards. He would do so for several reasons,

most directly those rooted in his conceptualizations of "traditional education," "experience," "psychologization," and "democracy."

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938/1963) identified the characteristics of "traditional education" and the "criteria of experience," both of which (can) play a role in the construction of a radical national curriculum standards critique. In traditional education:

The main purpose or objective is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life, by means of *acquisition of the organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill* [italics added]....Since the subject-matter as well as standards of proper conduct are handed down from the past, the attitude of pupils must, upon the whole, be one of docility, receptivity, and obedience. Books, especially textbooks, are the chief representatives of the lore and wisdom of the past, while teachers are the organs through which pupils are brought into effective connection with the material. Teachers are the agents through which knowledge and skills are communicated and rules of conduct enforced. (p. 18)

For Dewey, national curriculum standards would run the risk of disintegrating into or sustaining a system of traditional education by defining achievement in terms of acquiring external knowledge (whether defined as facts or skills or by liberals or conservatives), that which via assessment would necessitate students becoming "docile," "receptive," and "obedient."

Further, building upon a related set of arguments, national curriculum standards would contradict Dewey's (1938/1963) "theory of experience." They would "violate[] the principle of interaction from one side" (p. 42), privilege "objective conditions" over "internal ones," and "subordinate...what goes on within...individuals..." (p. 42). For Dewey, "all genuine education comes about through experience..." (p. 25), that is as an "interaction" *between* "objective and internal conditions," or what Dewey called a "*situation*" (p. 42). Education must consider both the objective *and* internal and resist the temptation to overemphasize either in the extreme. Since all students come to school with individual and unique experiences, they must encounter unique and individual educations. Therefore, "[a] single course of studies for all progressive schools is out of the question; it would mean abandoning the fundamental principle of connection with life-experiences" (p. 78). The "material for learning...must be derived from materials which at the outset fall within the scope of ordinary life-experience" (p. 73). Only then comes "the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organized form, a

form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person" (pp. 73-74). Dewey would reject national curriculum standards as subordinating internal to objective conditions, and for taking as their starting point organized subject matter as opposed to the real life experiences of the learners. For ultimately, it is "incumbent" on educators to "be aware of the potentialities for leading students into new fields which belong to *experiences already had* [italics added], and [to] use this knowledge as [their] criterion for selection and arrangement of the conditions that influence their [students'] present experience" (p. 76). As such, this process cannot be imposed externally or pre-standardized.

Dewey (1902/1956) recognized "the need of reinstating into experience the subject-matter of the studies, or branches of learning," that this subject matter "must be restored to the experience from which it has been abstracted," and that "[i]t needs to be *psychologized*; turned over, translated into immediate and individual experience within which it has its origin and significance" (p. 22). Otherwise, content becomes denatured, "dead and barren" (p. 24), unmotivating, and insignificant. Dewey's objection here to national curriculum standards would rest on their disconnection to individual life experiences. National curriculum standards *cannot* develop out of the experiences of learners; they cannot be so "abstracted." Instructional "tricks" to make standardized subject matter "interesting" or "motivating" or "experiential," necessary gimmicks in traditional education yet nonsensical with respect to the psychologized, demonstrate its futility and risk transforming it into something it isn't, something antithetical to standardization, something by definition "unstandard" thus out of curricular bounds.

Lastly, in my view, Dewey's (1916/1966) conception of "democracy and education"—the "democratic ideal"—challenges even the very possibility of national curriculum standards. Put more bluntly, Dewey's position *necessitates and demands* their condemnation, whether conservative or liberal, as inherently and fundamentally undemocratic (if not *antidemocratic*). This becomes clearer as one examines Dewey's meaning in defining democracy and in characterizing its mode of education.

In Dewey's (1916/1966) own famous words:

The two elements in our criterion both point to democracy. The first signifies not only more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest, but greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control. The second means not only freer interaction between social groups (once isolated so far as intention could keep up a separation) but change in social

habit—its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse. And these two traits are precisely what characterize the democratically constituted society. (pp. 86-87).

Finally, as is well known, Dewey presented “democracy [as] more than [simply] a form of government...” but as “primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 87).

For Dewey, democracy and democratic education obligated “[t]he extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his [*sic*] own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his [*sic*] own...” (p. 87). “These more numerous and more varied points of contact denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond; they consequently put a premium on variation in his [*sic*] action” (p. 87). So what, then, of national curriculum standards?

First, one must consider the extent to which they would promote “more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest.” In fact, they would not. On the contrary, they would reduce the number of such points, insisting instead that teachers and students conform to the same, limited and defined set of interests, and that they force themselves into the tiny boxes of what some *external* source or sources defined as the (their) common interests. For variation and expansion are incompatible with standardization. The only pro-standards choices are to either include directly so many interests and knowledges that any standard curriculum becomes unwieldy and impossible to implement, or create national curriculum standards that are so vague as to become meaningless, useless, and unable to serve as serious instructional guidelines. Second, one must consider Dewey’s point on the “freer interaction between social groups” and the “continuous readjustment [of social habit] through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse.” National curriculum standards do not *necessarily* reduce the *interaction* between social groups, but they do diminish the *freedom*. Social interaction occurs within a narrowed context, one defined by the curriculum standards and those who determine them. It takes place only on the conditions and terms established by the standards and their setters. New situations are precluded—situations become the same for everyone (because of, in part, national and international assessments). Varied intercourse disappears as students and teachers all engage in a single, national, predetermined, and standardized pedagogical discourse. As concepts, “associated living” and “conjoint communicated experience” morph into statements such as “live like me on my terms; speak my language as I define your experience.” For Dewey, this amounts to no less than the attempt to maintain and strengthen a democracy via a less than democratic—an

undemocratic or even antidemocratic—education. In all, it presents an unsustainable and illogical situation.

In sum, Dewey furnishes social educators an extensive critical foundation upon which to build, strengthen, and apply a radical Left critique of national curriculum standards. He paints an insightful picture, one foreshadowing myriad contemporary concerns. In appropriating his pedagogy one can scrutinize both conservative and liberal endeavors as potential instances of (1) a “will-to-traditionalize,” that is as specific efforts toward a silencing and conformative subject matter-centeredness; (2) an “experience-less disconnectedness”; (3) an “antipsychologization,” or a merely *transmitted* assemblage of externally established content; and (4) an “undemocratic”/“antidemocratic” struggle to narrow or hierarchically limit the meaning of “shared common interest” and “free interaction between social groups,” and to lessen the effects of “varied intercourse.”

Freire: “Banking” & “Oppression”

The late Paulo Freire’s (1970) critique of “banking” education represents perhaps one of the best known denunciations of traditionalism in modern educational history. Although its potential with respect to the radical Left position opposing national curriculum standards remains to be fully explored, its foundational importance here cannot be overestimated. From a Freirean view, I argue that: (1) national curriculum standards represent an *actual* rather than *potential* instance of banking education (i.e., that national curriculum standards *are* banking education and not that they might *become* banking education); and (2) national curriculum standards are “oppressive.”

For Freire (1970), banking education exists to the extent that schooling “turns [students] into ‘containers,’ into ‘receptacles’ to be ‘filled’ by the teacher” (p. 53). Further, “[t]he more completely [the teacher] fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she [or he] is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are” (p. 53). “Education [thus] becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor...the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (p. 53).

In treating Freire’s critique, educators perhaps too frequently focus on method as opposed to purpose, content (i.e., “curriculum”), and/or assessment. Yet, conceptually, banking education suggests the importance of each. The content that is deposited is crucial. Created by those in power, it supports and maintains the status quo, a situation most beneficial to society’s elites. Whether selected by conservatives or liberals, and however defined, it represents a knowledge designed to induce passivity and standardization. But while Freire characterizes banking education according to the thoughts and actions of teach-

ers, I would argue that they, like their students, also are at the mercy of standards.

Whether predetermined facts, skills, values, or guidelines; Eurocentric or “multicultural”; or presented and tested via lecture and multiple choice or cooperative learning and performance examinations; national curriculum standards signify a banking approach. The point of curriculum standards is to assure that somehow students leave schools and classrooms having acquired a preestablished body of knowledge, one selected and sanctioned by a relatively small and powerful group of individuals. Knowledge is deposited, whether “traditionally” or “authentically,” and students (and teachers) are held “accountable,” that is they are evaluated based on the extent to which students can demonstrate their success in “receiving, filing, and storing” certain “official” deposits. This demonstration might involve paper and pencil tasks or it might take the form of alternative/authentic/performance-based testing. Still, in the end, the results and effects are the same.

Consequently, from the Freirean perspective, national curriculum standards constitute a fundamental form of “oppression.” As Freire (1970) wrote:

One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is *prescription*. Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual’s choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber’s consciousness. Thus, the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor. (pp. 28-29)

If nothing else, national curriculum standards represent “prescriptions.” Some powerful group determines and regulates content for everyone (i.e., teachers *and* students). To the extent that students and teachers conform, adapt their behavior—teaching and learning—to the standards, they are successful. Standards provide a mechanism by which an individual or small group can impose decisions upon others, decisions made based upon their own understandings, interests, and needs.

Radical Left critics must consider and build upon the possibility that national curriculum standards in and/or for the social studies actualize a banking orientation and an oppressive approach to education, that they legitimize the control of knowledge and prescribe a conformity to perspectives maintained by a powerful minority. Critical social educators need to pursue the consequences of such conditions for democracy and democratic citizenship, justice, equality, op-

portunity, and identity (especially with respect to ethnicity, race, gender, class, sexuality, age, and culture).

Foucault: Regimes of Truth

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse [it] accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those...charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'regime of truth.' (Foucault, 1980, p. 133)

The work of philosopher Michel Foucault provides a more recent and increasingly significant set of critical insights relevant to the construction of a radical critique of national curriculum standards. Specifically, his conceptualizations of "régime of truth," "power/knowledge," and "disciplinary power" offer important and unique contributions to the radical Left view, contributions that complement the critical efforts of both Dewey and Freire.

From this perspective, national curriculum standards function as a regime of truth, one in which "truth" is "produced and sustained" by a "system of power" and, in turn, where truth "induces" certain "effects of power." A regime of truth, as such, comprises both "political" and "ethical" dimensions or aspects (e.g., Gore, 1993), coercive controls that operate on and through the body.¹⁰ In the national curriculum standards debate, truth (or "knowledge") is that which is consistent with the standards themselves; it is produced out of and privileges specific relations of power. National curriculum standards work to legitimize certain knowledges as true, certain methods as appropriate to the establishment of truth (e.g., the "scientific method," or the "top-down" method), certain acts as consistent with truth, and the power of certain individuals to determine truth and what constitutes it (and thus the power to create national [universal] curriculum [and performance] standards).

Such a regime of truth builds upon a precise and localized set of linking relationships between power and knowledge, linking relationships that, for Foucault, signified the effects and existence of contemporary “disciplinary power” or “disciplinary practices” (Foucault, 1975/1979; Simola, Keikkinene, & Silvonen, 1998, p. 68). Disciplinary power and/or practices refer to “a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 138). Disciplinary seeks in individuals “docility” and utility,” a simultaneous reduction and expansion of subjective forces (Foucault, 1975/1979). For Foucault, such disciplinary—and *disciplining*—effects are maintained by “historical observation” or “surveillance,” “normalizing judgments,” and “the examination” as techniques or technologies of power.

For radical critics of national curriculum standards, generally as well as for the social studies in particular, Foucault’s work offers several constructive insights. First, it encourages an interrogation of the degree to which knowledge (i.e., curriculum standards) is produced as a result of power—more specifically, unequal, hierarchical, and asymmetrical *relations* of power. Is, for example, what counts as legitimate truth in schools necessarily “truth” (or even significant and appropriate knowledge), or is it simply an indicator of who gets to decide and who doesn’t? Second, radical Left critics must consider how power is produced as a result of knowledge. To what extent are existing (and dominant/

dominating) power relationships maintained and boosted by inclusionary/exclusionary content choices? How is one’s power enhanced or impeded via unequal access to this so-called *truth*? Third, critical educators must question the inherent disciplinary nature of national curriculum standards. They must ask: How do national curriculum standards coerce certain behaviors? How do they establish conformity? How are links between curriculum and performance standards actualized as regimes of truth, replete with their constituent political (interpersonal) and ethical (intrapersonal) aspects, and how do they contribute to the production of politically docile and economically useful individuals? Why? And to what ends? Perhaps uniquely pertinent to the social studies, these and related questions must be addressed by the radical Left within the specific yet fluid contexts of national curriculum standards and their ultimate meaning for US democracy, citizenship education, community, and globalization.

Toward a Radical Critique

A radical Left critique, then, must consider at least the following foundational questions: (1) Do national curriculum standards encourage a “traditional education,” one built upon the transmission of external “knowledge,” a “subject matter-centered” approach aimed

at producing students who are “docile,” “receptive,” and “obedient?” If so, then how? Do they deny students the *possibility* of internalizing or “psychologizing” content? If so, then how? (2) Do national curriculum standards work to dissociate schooling from the lived experiences of students? If so, then how? (3) What are the consequences of national curriculum standards with respect to democracy? Do they recognize and promote “more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest” and “freer interaction between social groups” or do they inhibit it? How? (4) What are the parallels between “banking education” and national curriculum standards? Do and how might these parallels contribute to “oppression,” especially with respect to issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, identity, and culture? (5) How do national curriculum standards function as “regimes of truth?” What are their “political” and “ethical” dimensions? To what extent do they promote a power/knowledge-based conformity, a restriction of inter- and intrapersonal behavior in the direction of political “docility” and economic “utility?” How are these conditions established and maintained via the disciplinary practices or technologies of “surveillance,” “normalizing judgment,” and “examination?” and (6) In whose interests do national curriculum standards operate? Who benefits by them? Who does not? How do they affect the status and evolution of social justice, equality, freedom, fairness, and opportunity? In sum, radical Left critics must contend with the dangerous yet unavoidable conditions of national curriculum standards.

Overall, the radical Left position perceives national curriculum standards as: promoting an education that is divorced from the experiences of teachers and students; constructed upon externally imposed subject matter content; undemocratic and antidemocratic; an instance of banking education; consistent with and supportive of oppression; and actualized as a disciplinary regime of truth. Thus, radical Left educators must work toward more democratic alternatives, including those pedagogies developed out of a concern for justice, equality, freedom, fairness, and opportunity. They must build upon their radical origins and situate them within the context of contemporary schooling and its diverse and changing conditions—not only *educational* conditions per se, but also conditions of economics, social structure, culture, politics, history, geography, ethics, and epistemology.

It is in this vein that I turn now to E. Wayne Ross, whose recent work provides an excellent contemporary example of the origins and applications of the radical Left critique and its fundamental grounding—directly as well as indirectly—in the pedagogies of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault.

Ross & "Diverting Democracy": A Case Study

In "Diverting Democracy: The Curriculum Standards Movement and Social Studies Education," Ross (1996) presents one example of the contemporary radical Left critique of national social studies curriculum standards. Essentially, I argue that Ross's work: (1) represents—overtly and covertly—an example of the founding influences of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault with respect to the radical Left position and (2) provides some indication of how critical social educators might "revise and extend" the earlier work of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault vis-à-vis maintaining and strengthening the radical anti-national curriculum standards point of view.

Ross (1996; see also Ross, 1997) contends "that curriculum standards as they are presently pursued promote standardized school knowledge, divert attention away from teachers' roles in curriculum development, and skew the discourse of curriculum reform away from issues of equity" (pp. 18-19). He suggests that social studies educators consider "democratic alternatives..." (p. 19). Most importantly here, though, he draws from and builds upon Dewey's experience-based democracy as one "major resource for the resistance" (p. 23).

According to Ross (1996), "Dewey argued that [an] acquaintance with centralized knowledge must derive from situational concerns; that is, disciplinary knowledge must be attained by...inquiring students in ways that have meaning for them" (p. 23). The contemporary move toward standardization, however, rests upon the imposition of externally produced and compelled content, information divorced from inquiry and interpretation, and thus from the learners' experiences. Such content reflects the antidemocratic control of knowledge by a relatively small yet powerful, elite group of individuals—including federal and state bureaucrats, national professional education organizations (e.g., the NCSS and the NCHS), and textbook publishers and state adoption committees (especially those in California, Texas, and Florida)—whose interests converge around curriculum centralization. This centralized content standardization promotes the antidemocratic notion that curriculum can legitimately be developed and implemented absent a concern for the role of teachers. Ross (1996) considers this not only undemocratic but also nonsensical. As he states: "The curriculum standards movement ignores the most striking aspect of the teacher's role in curriculum development, which is its inevitability" (p. 33). Influenced by Dewey's (1916/1966) democratic "criteria"—"more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest" and "freer interaction between social groups" (p. 86)—Ross argues that "Operationally, curriculum standards projects in social studies are antidemocratic because they severely restrict the legitimate role of teachers and other educational professionals as well

as the public in participating in the conversation about the origin, nature, and ethics of knowledge taught in the social studies curriculum" (p. 33). Instead of broadening the "points of shared common interest," curriculum standards narrow them; instead of promoting "freer interaction between social groups," curriculum standards restrict or even eliminate it. Democratic decision making is replaced by "an effort of policy elites to standardize the content and much of the practice of education" (p. 33), generally in the direction of a "neo-nativist" (p. 26) ideological conservatism.¹¹

Further, Ross's (1996) critique reflects and builds upon (albeit indirectly) the Freirean concerns with both *banking education* and *oppression*. His conviction is that the movement toward national social studies curriculum standards "reduces the role of teachers to technicians," and that it "promotes a view of *teachers as conduits* [*italics added*] for the delivery of knowledge that is externally defined" (p. 33). In other words, national curriculum standards encourage teachers to transmit—*deposit*—someone else's knowledge into the minds of "receptacle" students. The "prescribed" content, ideally in the minds of pro-standards advocates, belongs to "the exclusive domain of disciplinary specialists, policy elites in private foundations, and public officials" (p. 34). In the specific case of textbook publishers, this content "promotes values...that maintain social and economic hierarchies and relationships supported by the dominant socioeconomic class" (p. 24). It thus parallels Freire's (1970) first principle of oppression, that is "the imposition of one individual's choice upon another" (p. 29). Again, as Freire argued, prescriptions—*impositions*—work by "transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness...[such that] the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor" (p. 29). In Ross's framework, this is true for both teachers and students. For teachers, it results from the essential "will-to-'teacher-proof'" inherent in most contemporary standardizing efforts. Here, teachers become merely knowledge transmitters. For students, the conforming behavior follows the establishment of examinations—"high stake," "curriculum-aligned," and mandated.

Lastly, Ross's (1996) article demonstrates a Foucauldian apprehension toward the relationships between power and knowledge sustained by the national curriculum standards movement, especially to the extent that those in power—that is, those with the power to determine legitimate truth/knowledge—work to restrict the behavior of teachers and students. They do so, in part, by "marginaliz[ing]... teachers' roles in formal curriculum (policy) development and creat[ing] unequal participation and power relations" (p. 35). Here, standards work to *standardize*, promoting a nationally consistent content as well as a nationally consistent rendering of teaching and learning. They do

so via the disciplinary practices of surveillance, normalization, and examination. Of the three, Ross is most adamant with respect to examination. He does recognize, however, the significance of surveillance and normalization. Surveillance implies *observation*, and throughout "Diverting Democracy" Ross hints at a relationship between national curriculum standards and an *awareness* at least of what teachers and students are doing. For example, he identifies the movement's aim to "test students and *report the results to the public* [italics added]" (p. 18). With respect to normalization, Ross writes that "The curriculum standards movement taps into the cultural *norms* [italics added] of schools as academic institutions that attempt to transmit what is already known, rather than promoting the development of intellectual institutions that prize inquiry and thought" (p. 31); it, in effect, reinforces such norms.

Examinations, in a Foucauldian sense, lead both to political docility and economic utility. For teachers, the "accountability" pressures of student achievement encourage docility and discourage creativity, professional decision making, and reflectivity. In that content and assessments are determined externally, teachers are disempowered and left simply to *deliver* curriculum in a limited, testable, "don't rock the boat" or exert professional autonomy, format. For students, the problem signifies a post-*A Nation at Risk* linking of "economic competitiveness ...to high levels of achievement on *standardized tests* [italics added], [where] curriculum standards constitute an effort to improve test results" (p. 31) and thus the economy. Student performance—academic *behavior*—is unacceptable and irrelevant unless it produces measurable gains in exam scores theoretically indicative of one's potential to contribute to American economic ("corporate") prosperity. Here, success is *identical for everyone*.

In sum, Ross views the national curriculum standards movement as fundamentally conservative. His work draws from and advances the earlier thinking of scholars such as Dewey, Freire, and Foucault. He builds on their work by applying it to concerns specific to contemporary schooling, particularly social studies, and advances a set of alternatives to national curriculum standards grounded in a "grassroots" approach to curriculum development in which curriculum is understood to include "the experiences of the classroom" (p. 35), "shared decision making, responsive[ness] to local needs, support[] of teacher development[,] and reflective practice" (p. 36). As Ross concludes:

Grassroots curriculum development requires teachers and others to see and act on the connections between classrooms and the society. Teachers' efforts in the classroom are tied to broader efforts to promote democracy. If teach-

ers can find ways to link the two, both will be strengthened. (pp. 36-37)

Discussion

In this section, I reiterate the major points of my argument. In addition, building upon my understanding of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault, I present my own case against national curriculum standards in and for the social studies. Lastly, I consider the implications of the radical Left critique for contemporary social education, particularly in terms of theory, research, curriculum, and instruction.

Summary

To review, the recent debate over national curriculum standards is one of the most controversial and heated in contemporary US education. It extends across the pedagogical and political spectrum, and includes voices representing an array of diverse and divergent perspectives. And yet, in its present construction, its dominant characteristic is the extent to which a pro-national curriculum standards consensus has formed, one uniting historically opposed individuals and groups around the belief that improving (if not saving) public education depends upon and demands a general commitment to a nationwide (if not global) rendering of content and achievement standards.¹²

Opposition, however, has grown, and currently emanates from both Right and Left leaning critics. From the Right, critics challenge the extent to which the federal government should be involved in matters of education at all—in terms of, for example, determining policy and increasing spending—especially given the historical US view that education is and should be principally a state and local concern. From the Left, more radical educators question the overall fairness and justice of curriculum standards, particularly with respect to issues of power, equality, opportunity, and identity. It is this radical Left position that has formed the foundation of this paper.

More precisely, the radical Left critique focuses on the conditions and features of national curriculum standards within the contexts of student and teacher experience, democracy, “banking education,” oppression, and power/knowledge. Drawing upon the earlier work of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault, today’s Leftist critics perceive the national curriculum standards movement as one that promotes—even necessitates—a decontextualized, disconnected from experience, traditional, antidemocratic, “banking,” oppressive, and normalizing mode of education and schooling. It makes possible and sustains a standardized and standardizing social education. Ross’ (1996) “Diverting Democracy” provides one clear example of this critique, including its foundations and applications.

Given the historical roots of the social studies, as well as its present concerns, it seems plausible at least that social studies educators should oppose any effort to establish a national social studies curriculum. (Of course, the works of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault provide one reasonable first step toward understanding why.) For if the social studies is to remain a meaningful and significant curricular and instructional area, then its theorists and practitioners must consider several recent and historical, critical and problematic, epistemological and ethical, points. First, as a field, the social studies is by definition *interdisciplinary*—it draws from a multitude of subject matters and content areas. These “foundational” disciplines include more than simply the traditionally privileged and dominant history, geography, and civics; they include also a number of distinct knowledge domains, those centered not only in the human and social sciences but in the “harder” sciences and humanities as well. Needless to say, the foci and characteristics of these disciplines change constantly, creating new emphases, new methodologies, new assumptions, and new comprehensions—even new fields of study. These conditions cannot be standardized and are not identical for everyone. One need only review the current discussions around “postmodernism,” “cultural studies,” “chaos theory,” and “evolutionary psychology” (to name but a few recent controversies) to see the contextual complexities in operation. As a field, social studies rests upon a structure whose very existence implies fluidity, an ever shifting groundwork that cannot be pre-established or standardized, that cannot be set in stone.

Second, social studies educators must consider the extent to which, echoing Shirley Engle, “decision making” remains at least on some level the defining “heart” of the social studies. For if one accepts and heeds the Deweyan origins of the field, then one is left with the social studies as decision making grounded in reflective problem solving, a situation centered on the importance of student-perceived and relevant social and personal problems. That individuals might perceive similar problems as meaningfully relevant is clear. But what should be clear also is that these same individuals might create or discover uniquely meaningful “solutions,” namely those produced via uniquely meaningful experiences (even should each pursue a similar “method” such as Dewey’s “reflective thinking”). It seems a stretch, then, that some individual or group might create a national social studies curriculum of any real significance or profundity.

Third, social studies educators must (and, of course, most do) take seriously their historical roles in actualizing and advancing US democracy and democratic education. The question is whether national curriculum standards truly are democratic. Is it more democratic for a small group of powerful, generally unelected individuals to establish and mandate a singular, formal knowledge for everyone,

or is it more democratic for all legitimate stakeholders to play a meaningful, respected part? It seems only logical that the principles of democracy—freedom, consent of the governed—preclude the first. It *must* be more democratic for power to be as decentralized as possible and for the curriculum process to include (at least) students, parents, and teachers. In the social studies, given social educators' responsibilities in terms of history, citizenship, and culture, this point is crucial. The nature of national curriculum standardization, regardless of *specific* content, runs counter to democracy and provides students only a negative lesson in democratic education.

Fourth, because social studies educators must seek to understand the very nature of US society, they must then consider the consequences of national curriculum standards for diversity and multiculturalism. Does US society imply cultural unity? Does it mean homogeneity? If not, that is if US society is diverse and multicultural, then what are the implications of national curriculum standards? Should they in any way reflect culture and/or, more specifically, the cultural dynamics of US (if not global) society? Can they? Does *curriculum* standardization imply anything in terms of *cultural* standardization? If so, then what? Social studies educators must examine their own beliefs and pedagogies in order to clarify and perhaps challenge (1) their individual interpretations of US culture and US society and (2) their unique and power-related understandings of the compatibility and desirability of standardization in light of the very real potentialities of cultural assimilation and cultural diversity. In effect, the question is whether or not *diversity* can be *standardized*.

Overall, my interpretation is that social educators should fight against national curriculum standards as generally antidemocratic, disconnected from authentic experience, oppressive, a form of "banking education," and disciplinary. Their present and future institutionalization threaten a number of characteristics central to the modern social studies: interdisciplinarity; problem solving/decision making; democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic education; and cultural diversity, multiculturalism, and multicultural education.

Implications

This work implies a number of possible directions for social studies theory, research, curriculum, and instruction. With respect to theory and research, several avenues remain open. Future scholarly efforts should consider, for example, other relationships between the works of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault and the creation and establishment of national social studies curriculum standards. For, as I indicate below, their writings present complicated, wide-ranging pedagogies—philosophies far too extensive to address adequately in a single study. As their projects dealt frequently with topics of specific importance to

the social studies (e.g., democracy, equality, justice, power), pursuing and creating “new” connections is especially vital. Moreover, scholars should investigate other influences on present-day radical Left critics (sources besides Dewey, Freire, and Foucault, for example those I identify below). These might include “progressivism,” “social reconstructionism,” “multiculturalism,” “critical theory,” “postmodernism/poststructuralism,” “feminist theory,” and “critical pedagogy” (among others). Unfortunately, exploring such influences is well beyond this scope of this paper.

In addition, social studies researchers might provide analyses of specific national curriculum standards projects as well as individual radical Left critiques. Such work could offer insights into the extent to which: (1) standards projects actually exhibit those characteristics most offensive to the radical Left and (2) particular radical Left critics demonstrate some clear association with Dewey, Freire, Foucault, and other relevant critical philosophers and pedagogues. It could explore the relationships between *national* curriculum standards and *localized* classroom life by incorporating historical, theoretical, and/or empirical (quantitative/qualitative) methodologies.

With respect to social studies curricula, this paper supports efforts to localize as much as possible, *ideally* placing curricular work in the hands of classroom teachers and students. If nothing else, it at least advocates a curriculum development that maximizes inclusivity, one in which teachers, students, and parents all play significant and meaningful roles. Fundamentally, it views curriculum as dynamic, as a fluid, evolving process that must be grounded in teacher and student experiences and understood as an effect of power. Here, the developing field of “cultural studies” (e.g., Giroux, 1996; Giroux [with] Shannon, 1997) provides a potentially useful orientation, especially to the extent that educators are beginning to take seriously the notions of “youth” and “popular” cultures.

Finally, in terms of instruction, the Deweyan and Freirean implications are well known. Dewey’s (1910) “reflective thinking” and Freire’s (1969/1973, 1970, 1997, 1998) “problem-posing” education and “education for critical consciousness” have long been mainstays of progressive and critical pedagogies (see also McLaren, 1999). Even so, Schrag’s (1995) recent work offers a contemporary application of Deweyan education, focusing on arguments, a concern for evidence, and the desire and ability to continue learning after graduating high school. Regarding Foucault, Gore (1993) provides one feasible perspective, an instruction grounded in “reflective teaching” and “action research.” Overall, this paper supposes a pedagogy consistent with experience, diversity, inclusion, localization, and democracy.

Conclusions

On at least two levels this paper remains necessarily incomplete. If anything, it provides no more than a heuristic starting point. For, obviously, the philosophies of Dewey, Freire, and Foucault are extensive and complex; they represent holistic yet varied and multiple perspectives, involving many critical ideas, perceptions, and awarenesses, from which I have been limited, unfortunately, to selecting and exploring but a few. I have, in fact, barely scratched the surface.

But second, it must be clear that a range of diverse and disparate scholars and schools of thought, those other than Dewey, Freire, and Foucault and their respective viewpoints, influenced the origins and evolution of the contemporary radical Left critique of social studies national curriculum standards. Today's critics draw from: (1) "progressivism" (e.g., Kilpatrick), (2) "social reconstructionism" (e.g., Counts, Brameld), (3) "feminist theory" and "feminist pedagogy" (e.g., Belenky, Gilligan), (4) "multicultural education" (e.g., Banks), (5) "neo-Marxist" and "correspondence theories" (e.g., Bowles & Gintis), and (6) recent advances in "structural" (e.g., Apple) and "poststructural" (e.g., Giroux, McLaren) critical pedagogy. Since the radical Left critique is so dynamic and so expansive, there are it seems as many influences as there are individual critics.

Finally, social studies educators must remember that while no one is against "high standards," clear problematics lay in issues of *meaning* and *detail*: Will students "know" more social studies, and know it "better?" No one favors "low standards," "just letting children do whatever they want," or "ignoring or dismissing content." One may indeed, however, oppose various *aspects* of the curriculum standards movement. The usual questions apply: Whose standards? Whose knowledge? Who should decide? And to what ends?Sizer (1996) is particularly relevant here:

...attempts to have national standards that are even loosely aligned with national assessments and curricula...are...dangerous and potentially undemocratic... Those who say that censorship and ideologically dominated curricula cannot happen here can find it everywhere today, albeit mostly at local levels....To try to create some sort of imposed national educational pattern is as imprudent politically as it is unwise as a matter of scholarship and democratic philosophy.... The task is to achieve [high standards] even when the[ir] definition...is always itself in motion, and to achieve [them] in a climate of diversity and academic freedom. (pp. 45-46)

I do not doubt the intentions of conservative and liberal educators involved in the curriculum standards movement. Certainly, they want good things. Still, the radical Left critique remains vital. It offers social studies professionals an important, too frequently ignored and misunderstood, perspective, one with the potential to provide a host of meaningful insights into the current and future state of social and social studies education. It insists that the field *take seriously* the notions of experience, democracy, social justice, and power, and not just present them as untextured, one-sided issues—points with which everyone claims (uncritical) agreement. For the arguments inherent in the radical Left critique matter; they demand attention. It may come down to questions such as whether teachers and students really count, whether we will recognize and legitimize difference, and whether we will cede to elite and powerful individuals and groups the “right” to impose their knowledge and their “American” culture on the rest of us—to define our identities for us and to reap the benefits. For the powerful, the answers are clear; for social studies educators, they should be.

Notes

¹ A version of this article was presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies (CUFA), Anaheim, 1998. I wish to thank most especially Greg Hamot for his patient and insightful suggestions (and for his willing generosity in committing substantial time to reviewing my work). I also wish to thank Jill Cohen and Paula Vinson for their supportive yet critical readings of earlier drafts of this manuscript. Lastly, I acknowledge the work of Perry Marker, Wayne Ross, and the comments of the several anonymous CUFA and *Theory and Research in Social Education* reviewers.

² One might also consult Apple's (1996) perspective on the recent “neo-conservative” (i.e., social and cultural conservatives)–“neo-liberal” (i.e., economic conservatives) alliance.

³ Reagan (1984) insisted, however, that the federal government would continue to provide for approximately 8 percent of the costs of education—technically, not a decrease, but certainly a less than sizable portion of the huge federal budgets of the era as well as a weak effort in the face of inflation and important school expenditures (e.g., construction, classroom materials, salaries, reducing class sizes).

⁴ This orientation, of course, has been criticized heavily in recent years. In brief, this criticism generally includes the notions that (a) schools should not be held responsible for the structural problems of US society (e.g., that unemployment, low wages, and noncompetitiveness are economic problems not school problems), (b) education should be about more than contributing to the profit margins of major corporations and the incomes of their shareholders, and (c) such an economic utilitarian viewpoint of public schooling benefits the wealthy at the expense of individuals in poverty. Further, even if one accepts this conservative viewpoint, there is at least some question as to whether any evidence supporting a relationship between standards and achievement and standards and economic productivity actually exists (see, e.g., Levin, 1998; Wolf, 1998). Lastly, I would note that there has been some influence on this orientation by “Great Books” and other “perennialist” approaches, see most notably Adler (1982).

⁵ Clearly, many other conservative critics deemphasize national curriculum standards as secondary to school choice, vouchers, decreased federal support, US corporate economic “needs,” and so forth. (Note that I discuss opposition to national curriculum standards below.) My point here is not that Hirsch and Ravitch disapprove of these

elements of the conservative agenda, but simply that they believe they cannot be effective without a national system of content and performance standards. In fact, both Hirsch and Ravitch are sympathetic to other conservative initiatives given the implementation of national standards. I do note, however, that Hirsch (1996) perceives himself to be an "educational conservative" but a "political liberal."

⁶ The NCSS has a relatively long history of moving in the direction of national standards. See, for example, National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools (1989), NCSS (1981), NCSS Task Force on Curriculum Guidelines (1971), and NCSS Task Force on Scope and Sequence (1989).

⁷ Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn were intimately involved as leaders in the National History Standards Project. See Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn (1997), especially chapter 7. For further critique see Gibson (1998).

⁸ The Task Force definition had been adopted by the NCSS Board of Directors in 1992.

⁹ I am not here *necessarily* advocating Dewey's version of progressive education, but merely indicating his critique of traditionalism. I would remind readers that Dewey spoke against various "Either/Or" characterizations (e.g., traditional vs. progressive, child vs. curriculum, individual vs. social, etc.). In fact, Dewey was as apprehensive about "extreme progressivism"—that is, Kilpatrickian child-centeredness—as he was about extreme subject matter-centeredness. Clearly, though, he favored what he perceived to be *properly* progressive education over traditional education. I note lastly an assumption that I make with respect to curriculum standards and testing. That is, I surmise that curriculum standards are, in fact, inevitably meaningless and wasteful without some parallel mode of assessment (whether voluntary or mandated). Without measurement, standards are not and cannot be standards (although I do not support either curriculum standards or mandated exams).

¹⁰ The work of Foucault and its relevance for contemporary education has been and continues to be a growing area of interest for critical educators. The American Educational Research Association has established recently a "Foucault and Education" Special Interest Group. In addition to Gore, I would refer readers interested in Foucault and education to general, if not entirely introductory, sources such as Ball (1990), Popkewitz (1991), Popkewitz and Brennan (1998; see several included selections), and Middleton (1998). The philosophical and social theoretical literature proper is, of course, extensive and representative citations are beyond the scope of this paper.

¹¹ Ross here is drawing on Cornbleth and Waugh's (1995) recent and remarkable work *The Great Speckled Bird: Multicultural Politics and Education Policymaking*.

¹² A number of points. First, I realize that an argument could be made that, with or without national curriculum standards, teachers *may* ultimately be free to pursue their own paths. This is true, but only to a limited extent. As teacher evaluations and student assessments become increasingly tied to curriculum standards, teachers (and students) will inevitably feel more pressure to conform to their demands. Second, I would note that regardless of federal/national policy, one might reasonably claim that a national social studies curriculum already exists (*de facto*) vis-à-vis the homogeneity of state and local guidelines and the power of textbooks and textbook publishers. Third, I would remind readers that, thus far, all major curriculum standards efforts in the social studies aim to be purely voluntary and *not* federally imposed.

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Critical Reflection in a Social Studies Methods Semester

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Abstract

This paper reports on an investigation of the extent, nature, and development of critical reflection among three preservice teachers in a semester-long secondary social studies methods course. An action research case study methodology was used to investigate the study participants' deliberation about the ethical and moral basis of their work as teachers, and reflection on the broader social conditions of schooling. The results of this study suggest that, in different ways and measures, teacher educators can influence preservice teachers to become more critically reflective. Furthermore, while encouraging some amount of critical reflection about teaching appears a realistic aim for teachers of preservice secondary social studies teachers, influencing the quality and content of such reflection seems to be the greater challenge.

Introduction

What some see as the apparent failure of social studies to deliver on the promise of democratic citizenship education has been a persistent concern among social educators since the field's inception. Without doubt, there are a good number of factors that figure into any credible explanation. One such factor is teacher education. What role do programs for the preparation of social studies teachers play in advancing the aim of democratic education? This question is an unresolved issue, according to recent, comprehensive reviews of social studies teacher education (Banks & Parker, 1990; Adler, 1991; Armento, 1996) and is particularly pressing for the social studies methods course. Little is understood about the ways in which this important component of certification programs prepares preservice teachers to educate for democracy.

This study addresses this knowledge gap with regard to a particular aim of preservice teacher education—the development of critically reflective practitioners. In designing this research, I assumed that critical reflection—consideration of the moral and ethical dimensions

of teaching and deliberation on the broader social conditions of schooling—is a necessary attribute of those social studies teachers who would enact democratic citizenship education. Yet some have suggested that such reflection may be beyond the reach of typical preservice teacher education programs (Berliner, 1988; Rudduck, 1989; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Calderhead, 1992; Kagan, 1992). Thus the contribution of the methods class to a critical reflection project becomes an important question for social studies teacher educators.

As an instructor of a social studies methods class, I examined the consequences of my efforts to promote critically reflective teaching among preservice teachers in the methods semester of their secondary teacher education program at a large Midwestern U.S. university. An instance of practitioner inquiry, the research consisted of a case study of three preservice teachers as they progressed through this semester. Given the lack of knowledge about promoting critically reflective teaching at the preservice level, the purpose of the research was to provide an empirically grounded examination of the following research question: What was the extent, nature, and development of critical reflection among students in a secondary social studies methods course in a research-university secondary social studies teacher education program? The intent in this article is to provide a descriptive account of the results of one particular attempt to promote critical reflection among preservice social studies teachers.

Research Methodology

I recently taught a Secondary Social Studies Methods course at a major Midwestern university. This course provided the context for the study. This research was designed as an action research study.¹ As defined by Karr and Kemmis (1983), this study was an instance of intentional, systematic inquiry into my own work with preservice social studies teachers in helping them become critically reflective teachers. Action research enabled an in situ, insider's perspective of this phenomenon. As Russell (1993) suggests, reflective teaching cannot be readily assessed except through observation of teachers in practice and in-depth discussion with them about how they approach their work. Conducting action/teacher research put me in a unique position to make these observations and have such conversations.

This research utilized a field study methodology that closely approximated a qualitative case study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Stake, 1995). Though this research made use of qualitative methods of investigation, it departs from common forms of qualitative research, such as ethnography, in that my objective was to do more than merely understand a complex social phenomenon (preservice teachers learning critically reflective teaching). In this study, I also played an active role

in influencing that phenomenon. In a sense, my teaching represented a form of treatment, as I intended to influence the study participants in ways that I hoped would encourage their critical reflection.

The nature and scope of the study was described to all nineteen students enrolled in this course on the first day of class, and a pool of volunteers was established. Absent an initial theory of the development of critical reflection among preservice teachers, all students in the class were deemed typical, potentially information-rich cases. Three students were randomly selected and invited to participate in this study. These three students were in the final year of their teacher certification program and would complete a student teaching assignment the following semester. The decision to limit the number of participants was driven by manageability and resource concerns, as well as the desire to pursue case analysis in-depth. Amy was 23 years old, Euro-American, completing her undergraduate degree in education, and a native of the Midwest. The other two participants were Euro-American post-baccalaureate students who had returned to school for teacher certification. Leonard, age 45 and a former Lutheran pastor, had already completed undergraduate degrees in anthropology and comparative religion and a Master of Divinity degree. Nick, age 25, was raised in the Midwest and had earned his bachelors degree in psychology from an Ivy League school.

Collecting data for this study hinged on an operational conception of critical reflection and critically reflective teaching. In an area of research where no such widely accepted conception exists (Calderhead, 1992; Sparks-Langer, 1992; Hatton & Smith, 1994), researchers are in a position to stipulate their own. Yet as Korthagen and Wubbels (1991) argue, every conception of reflective teaching assumes some view of good teaching. Thus researchers who propose conceptions of reflective teaching (and critically reflective teaching) should make explicit their underlying notions of good practice. For this study then, I utilized a two-tiered conceptualization of critical reflection and critically reflective teaching— a broad, general sense; and a strict/social reconstructionist sense. In the broad sense of the terms, the following definitions were used:

- Critical reflection is deliberation about the moral and ethical dimensions of education.
- Critically reflective teaching is instructional practice informed by critical reflection.

Drawing from the work of van Manen (1977), critical reflection is distinguished from technical reflection and practical reflection. The former is reflection concerned with the means to accomplish unexamined

ends. Practical reflection allows for a deeper examination of means and ends and is concerned with clarifying assumptions underlying educational process and explicating rationales for educational goals.

Going further, supporting this conception of critically reflective teaching is a view of good teaching drawn from the social reconstructionist reform tradition in U.S. teacher education (Liston and Zeichner, 1991). Social reconstructionists argue that, because schooling practices are never neutral in relation to the larger social order, educators should consider how their instructional decisions further democratic ideals of community, equality, caring, and freedom. From a social reconstructionist perspective, critically reflective teaching means teaching in ways that support a more democratic and just society. Critically reflective teachers consider the connections between what they do in the classroom, other schooling practices, and the broader social and political contexts surrounding their work. Thus, in the strict/social reconstructionist sense of the terms:

- Critical reflection is deliberation about wider social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of education, and deliberation about relationships between educational practice and the construction of a more equitable, just, and democratic society.
- Critically reflective teaching is instructional practice informed by critical reflection.

Given this two-tiered conception of critically reflective teaching, evidence of critical reflection was sought in as many different arenas as possible. An encompassing and in-depth look at a range of participant behaviors and thought was desired. In other instances of teacher education research investigating critical reflection among preservice teachers, the range of sites in which evidence of critical reflection was sought has been more narrowly circumscribed, usually relying on student-written accounts of experiences (e.g. Gore and Zeichner, 1991; Hatton & Smith, 1994; LaBoskey, 1994).

Of course no set of procedures can capture all of a teacher's thinking in a semester. Instead, a balanced view of teacher thinking at various points during the semester via multiple methods was sought. Data came in a variety of forms, clustered around three main sources. The first of these was a series of interviews conducted with case study participants at the start, midpoint, and conclusion of the semester. The resulting nine interviews were tape-recorded and provided information regarding developing perspectives about social studies, schooling, and critically reflective teaching. My observations of their work and participation in class, and the field notes these observations gen-

erated, comprised the second primary source of data. These field notes included both descriptive and reflective material (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) tied to direct observations. A third source was the assignments and other written work I collected from participants over the course of the semester.

Throughout the study, data were sought that served as evidence of 1) participant deliberation about the ethical and moral basis of their work as teachers, 2) teaching practices informed by this deliberation, and 3) factors that seem to facilitate and/or inhibit the learning of critically reflective teaching in social studies. Initially data were coded as evidence of critical reflection and critically reflective teaching, in both the broad and strict senses of the terms. In addition, two main sub-themes surfaced early in the process— democratic education and social studies rationales. Numerous data sources provided the possibility for triangulation of data, and the length of the investigation enabled the testing of interpretations through further encounters with study participants.

As an instance of interpretive teacher socialization research, the study was predicated on several key assumptions. There is a complex relationship assumed to exist between beliefs about teaching and the activity of teaching. Preservice students enter teacher education programs possessing rich and varied ideas and knowledge about teaching derived from numerous sources, including: personal experience, time spent in school, encounters with formal knowledge, and cultural and social group identification (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986; Zeichner and Gore, 1990; Richardson, 1996). Beliefs and ideas about teaching, and consequently the activity of teaching itself, are amenable to change as preservice teachers, sometimes deliberately and consciously and sometimes more passively, mediate new experiences and construct more sophisticated personal theories of teaching (Clandinin, 1986). Though the literature contains various models for how this developmental process works for most beginning teachers, exactly how those learning to teach form the beliefs that drive their practice remains something of a mystery. This research honors these assumptions and is directed at something less than testing a particular theory of teacher change. Instead, the aim is to provide a descriptive account of teacher development focused on a particular concern (i.e. critical reflection) in a particular context (i.e. a secondary social studies methods course).

Research Setting

The setting for this study was a semester-long secondary social studies methods class. The class had 19 students who met two days a week for nine weeks spread over three sessions during the semester.

These sessions, lasting four, three and two weeks, were separated by two field experiences (practica) of three weeks in length. Because Amy and Nick elected for grades 6-12 certification (instead of grades 9-12), in place of a second practicum, they were placed in a half semester student teaching placement that overlapped the final two weeks of Methods and continued until the end of the semester for their respective schools.

This course was designed to enhance the students' abilities and dispositions for critical reflection about their work as social studies teachers. Essential to this task was challenging them to consider the theoretical foundations of the field. The design of this methods course stemmed from an assumption that curriculum decision making should be grounded in a defensible rationale for the field. In particular, the readings and class discussions presented democratic education as a guiding ideal for the entire school curriculum in general and of special significance as a rationale for social studies in particular. Mainstream social studies foundations work, situated in the reflective inquiry tradition (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1978) and reflecting emphases on decision making (Engle & Ochoa, 1988) and rational deliberation on public issues (Oliver & Shaver, 1966), served as a starting point. However, more pointedly critical and expansive theories of democratic education also were included.

In moving beyond mainstream rationales, students were asked to reconsider conventional notions of democracy that are mainly concerned with electoral politics and classical liberal conceptions of the autonomous individual, what Westbrook (1996) calls "neohamiltonian democracy." To push the boundaries of mainstream conceptions of democracy, course readings and discussions also raised attention to social reconstructionism, (Counts, 1932; Brameld, 1956) with its emphasis on an explicit vision of social justice, a considered response to immediate crises of democracy in present society, and the value of social criticism (Stanley, 1992). Going still further, Dewey's (1916) conception of democracy as a "mode of associated living" enabling people to "frame their own life's purposes and carry them out" was featured. In Dewey's developmental sense of the term, democracy refers to something more than the structure of a political system. Rather, democracy is a far-reaching ethical ideal that has implications for the wide sweep of social institutions. Against the ideas of the mainstream social studies decision-making camp, through the arguments of social reconstructionists, and toward Dewey's more expansive, social and developmental articulation of democracy, students were asked to critically examine their own ideas of democratic citizenship education. The course asked students to struggle with these "advanced ideas" about democracy and reflect on the ways in which they might serve

as basis for making decisions about social studies curriculum and instruction.

When teachers incorporate these notions of democracy into their personal theories of teaching, reflection on instructional practice takes on critical dimensions. Critical democratic theory challenges teachers to consider features of their own particular situations in light of the broader social, historical, and ethical dimensions of teaching (Ross & Hannay, 1986). They are encouraged to think about how the choices they make as teachers contribute to, or mitigate against, the realization of a more democratic society. (Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Beyer, 1992, 1996). Hence teachers must become "curriculum-builders" (Adler & Goodman, 1986) who understand teaching as more than a matter of technical proficiency. Teaching for democracy is seen as a partisan, ethical act demanding decision-making that takes into account a far more extensive range of concerns than mastery of a pre-determined set of teaching techniques. Teaching demands moral deliberation. Accepting this view, methods class becomes a reform-oriented course meant to counter increasingly prevalent patterns of deskilling, routinization, and mechanistic approaches to curriculum (Apple, 1990, 1993). Hence, critical reflection becomes an essential part of what it means to teach.

Given this theoretical orientation, the actual methods employed in the class were consistent with what Cochran-Smith (1991) has described as the "cognitive dissonance" model of teacher education. Readings and class discussion were intended to disrupt conventional notions of practice in social studies classrooms in order to promote a re-examination in light of a more expansive and critical sense of democracy. Students were given an opportunity to critically examine the ideas raised in the course and shape their own views about them. Critical discourse (Ross & Hannay, 1986)—discourse characterized by open-minded, reasonable, and penetrating thinking—became an important part, and end, of Methods.

Yet not only did I want students to think and talk about critical democracy in Methods, I also wanted them to actually practice translating this talk into real classroom strategies. Based on my knowledge of what students entering methods courses typically hope to learn from the class, I anticipated that all this talk might come across as "more theory," at the expense of practical teaching suggestions desired by students. As Adler and Goodman note, "... perhaps the greatest challenge facing Methods courses is to discover ways in which critical perspectives of education can be raised, and at the same time, address students' desires for practical and meaningful teaching strategies" (1986, p.4). Thus a key component of my plan for the semester was creating opportunities for students to build curriculum. These curriculum building experiences not only were intended to provide

students with experiences developing lesson ideas in a setting where they would receive intelligent feedback from their instructor and peers, but also to equip them with a storehouse of ideas they could take with them into their field experiences.

At the end of the semester, and conforming to the four part framework of the course, my plan was that critical dialogue on the issues raised during the semester would yield— 1) at least a nascent understanding of what democratic education means for social studies, 2) a wealth of practical teaching ideas they could take into their student teaching placements to advance the cause of democratic education, 3) an awareness of the difficulties they would encounter as reform agents, and 4) a sense of where to turn for support as they attempted to overcome these difficulties. If these outcomes could be met, the hope was that these preservice teachers would be positioned to counter the tide of conformity in social studies practice and to resist the teacher-centered, barrage of worksheets, video upon video, and lecture/exam pattern of practice, so firmly established in many social studies classrooms (Armento, 1996; Schug, Todd, & Berry, 1984).

Findings

My discussion of the results will proceed in a case by case manner. I begin by drawing attention to the initial views of teaching and learning in social studies brought to *Methods* by Amy, Leonard, and Nick. Then I proceed with an analysis of how these views developed over the semester. In both parts of this description, my aim is to demonstrate the extent, nature, and development of each participant's critical reflection.

Case One: Amy

Initial Frames

Upon entering *Methods*, Amy described her decision to become a teacher in terms of a personally held "grand vision" and "wanting to make a difference." Her sense of mission as a teacher was not about knowledge transmission; it was about helping her students become better people. In her own words:

I'm kind of an idealistic person. I think that schools should help students and children learn to become better citizens, become better people, learn to function in our society, learn to think critically, and question their lives, and question who they are, and become knowledgeable about the things that are around them, help them, and then come to the realization of what they're good at, what they enjoy do-

ing, what they'd like to do with the rest of their life. Give them a springboard for the rest of their lives, I think. (interview, 1-22-96)

At the start of *Methods*, her vision was obviously far reaching. At some basic level though, her sense of purpose was rooted in moral and ethical concerns, and thus reflective of some measure of critical reflection.

In her initial interview, Amy also connected ideas about her role as a teacher to larger social, political, and cultural dynamics taking place outside her classroom. Though she had never encountered the terms "critical reflection" or "democratic education" prior to *Methods*, she held beliefs about the larger society that she thought would influence her teaching. In her view, the greatest social problems faced by this society stem from a divisiveness that kept its members from working together. She saw divisions "between the haves and the have-nots... the rich and the poor, or, you know, the white and the black, well, whatever division you want to put in between it, the educated and the non-educated" (interview, 1-22-96). Her understanding of the larger social order also shaped her vision of the kind of classroom she hoped to have. Amy explained:

I want to have a place where it's open and we can talk about anything. I mean, the problems that are going on in the world, the problems that are going on in the community, the problems that are going on in their school. I mean, and everyone can have an opinion... (interview 1-22-96)

Here Amy stands apart from a more technical, instrumentalist view of social studies. She rejects the idea of a standardized curriculum that lays out the knowledge and skills all students must learn. Instead, she sees the curriculum as a flexible and dynamic construct, responsive both to social problems and student interests and shaped by the give-and-take between teacher and students. Such a view of curriculum can be interpreted as critically reflective, in the strict sense of the term, for the manner in which it connects school practices with problems facing the larger society.

Advocates for democratic education would find Amy's ideas about shared authority and student voice encouraging. However, these two ideas represent the limited extent to which democratic education had a place in Amy's thinking about the relationship between school and society. She was able to articulate a commitment to democratic education in only sweeping and general terms. In her mind, schooling should be for democracy, but it should be for a lot of other worthy aims too. She viewed her classroom more as a place where students

would better themselves as individuals than as a place where students learn to function as participants in a society struggling to realize democratic ideals.

This lack of an articulated democratic theory to account for the relationship between school and society was mirrored by Amy's rationale for social studies. She had a sense in mind of the kind of social studies class she hoped to teach, but this was not predicated on a comprehensive, detailed conception of social studies role in the modern school curriculum. Her vision was more a result of personally held convictions and her belief that she could, as she put it, "make a difference."

Development over the Semester

Over the course of the methods semester, Amy developed both a conceptual understanding of critically reflective teaching and an awareness of its importance to her work as a social studies teacher. By the middle of the semester she had gone from hazarding a guess at the term's meaning to articulating a fairly clear definition of the term and its importance to her developing sense of practice. She commented:

...[C]ritically reflective teaching is thinking about the moral, and ethical, and the social things that are going on... I think that it's something that you have to strive for in teaching... I mean, how can you be a good teacher if you don't sit and think about what you're doing, especially in terms of social justice and giving kids a voice? I mean, isn't that what it's all about? (interview, 3-18-96)

After Methods had finished, she was willing to speak in even stronger terms about the importance of critically reflective teaching. She acknowledged that the term was new to her at the beginning of the semester, and at the end of the semester she gained more than just an intellectual awareness of its meaning. At the end of her half-semester student teaching experience, she claimed critical reflection was a part of her beginning practice:

...thinking about how you are teaching, what's happening in your classroom, and thinking about that on a moral, social level,... it's like something that I've been thinking about, and maybe have been experiencing. It's not just like I read it. I understand what it means. I feel like I'm dealing with it. (interview, 6-6-96)

Further evidence of her emerging understanding of critically reflective teaching comes from her reports of her two field experiences

during the methods semester. Both journal assignments asked her to make an assessment of the critically reflective teaching apparent in the schools she visited. About her first placement, she noted that teachers demonstrated ample reflection about what was happening in their classrooms and individual student progress, but this reflection rarely crossed into the critical sphere. Her lone opportunity to teach during this three week practicum had her doing a lesson providing an overview of Quebec as part of her cooperating teacher's unit on Canada. Amy said she struggled with what to include in this lesson as she planned the lesson:

I was thinking, you know, "I just can't tell these kids, like, "Here's some French." It doesn't tell them how the French actually ended up there, and who were the people that were there before the French, and like what happened with all the Europeans that came to the New World and were fighting over this land. I mean, that's an issue to deal with. (interview 3-18-96)

Because of time constraints, she did not pursue this matter in her lesson. Instead she spent most of the lesson teaching her students a few French words, aware all the while that she was not taking advantage of this opportunity to pursue more critical aims. Afterwards, she thought, "I didn't do enough. You know, like I didn't show them all the moral implications of, you know, settlements, of people coming here" (interview, 3-18-96).

More examples are found in her second field placement at a local high school. In this field experience, the manner in which teachers dealt with students became a prominent object of her critical reflection. She turned her attention to the implicit messages students receive from teachers who give more attention to favored groups of students:

I think there's a lot of hidden curriculum that goes on... I keep going back to how teachers interact with students, and some teachers just do treat kids differently. And I think kids learn from that...some teachers only talk to a certain group of students. I think that there's a problem. And that's where I would see that I'm being critically reflective—in thinking about the hierarchies and the little, the junk like that that goes on in school. (interview, 6-6-96)

Here again, Amy demonstrates her belief that teaching involves more than just delivering a pre-determined curriculum; she learned

that “there is so much more to teaching than the content you cover” (assignment, 4-30-96).

In reviewing the assignments and lesson plans she turned in over the course of the semester, there are examples of Amy’s critical reflection. For an assignment asking her to produce her best lesson, she turned in an entire unit plan designed to help students “analyze the social walls which we face daily.” She explained the rationale for the unit: “Prejudice, discrimination, labels, segregation, apartheid, and tensions between minority groups are all part of our society. This unit examines these issues past and present, and helps students to formulate opinions to change the future with these issues” (assignment, 4-2-96). Here and elsewhere during the semester, Amy emphasized the link between the kinds of relationships formed in her class and the problems (such as intolerance) afflicting the larger social order.

Over the course of the methods semester, Amy developed an understanding of critically reflective teaching, expressed its importance to her professional development, and demonstrated through words and actions her capacity to critically reflect about teaching and learning in social studies. On the other hand, critical reflection was not her primary concern, nor did it account for anything approaching the majority of her time spent thinking about educational practice. She, more than any other study participant, expected Methods to provide her with the practical tools of the trade. She was not so much looking for Methods to raise critical questions about pedagogy as she was looking for knowledge and skills of actual practice. Yet, the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching were never too far removed in her mind. She was mindful of the unintended messages students receive from the content and methods of lessons and the manner in which teachers and students communicated with each other. When critical reflection is defined as the consideration of the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching, the work she produced for Methods, as well as her reflections on her own and others’ teaching, indicate both her capacity and willingness to critically reflect.

However, employing the strict-sense definition of critical reflection yields a different assessment. At times, Amy’s thinking did take into account the intersection of educational practice and broader social and political concerns. By the end of the semester, she had come to the realization that teachers influence society whether they acknowledge this fact or not. She explained, “I think by determining what a student is going to learn, how they’re going to learn it, how you interact with students, how you help the students interact with one another, you’re changing society” (interview, 6-6-96). However her thinking about the nature of teaching was more often framed with reference to the individual’s role in society than it was to creating a more just, equitable, and humane society. Her focus on the individual re-

flected the interpretive framework she used in making sense of society. The social theory she used to account for social problems tended to localize explanations on individual shortcomings. In general, her analysis of social injustice did not appear to take into account broader systemic and structural dynamics located beyond the individual.

As was the case with critically reflective teaching, Amy could not recall ever hearing the term “democratic education” prior to *Methods*. By the end of *Methods*, she had heard plenty. Unlike critically reflective teaching though, all that she heard did not leave her with as clear of a sense of what democratic education meant or how important it was in defining herself as a teacher. As the semester progressed she struggled to make sense of the readings and discussions in which democratic education was featured. She found much of what she read and heard appealing. Yet she was not able to fully organize all that was appealing into a single, unified conception that helped to define her purpose as an educator. She saw problems in her field placements and was working on interpreting them through a democratic education framework that, in her mind, was only partially defined. She said:

I see a lot of kids that slip down the cracks, and don't see a lot of help coming from teachers... [D]emocratic education is important and being able to treat each student with dignity and respect, but I see myself trying to figure out, I'm trying to figure out what else there is...I don't think this for me is the be all and end all. Maybe. But I'm figuring that out. (interview, 6-6-96)

Just as Amy had gone through the semester without fully sorting out the meaning of democratic education, so too did she go through the semester without developing a rationale to account for social studies' place in the modern school curriculum. She had a passion to make a difference in the lives of her students. She spoke of respect and responsibility as the central aims of her teaching. She talked of a desire to prepare her students to meet the challenges they would face later in their lives. She had little difficulty explaining why she wanted to teach. Amy had much greater difficulty explaining why she wanted to teach social studies: “I don't think I have a very good definition of what a social studies teacher is yet” (interview, 6-6-96).

Summary

Over the four months of the semester, Amy acquired a conceptual understanding of what critically reflective teaching is and an awareness of its importance to how she thought about teaching. Using the broad-sense definition, this data analysis suggests that Amy was often critically reflective. Mostly such thinking centered on is-

sues such as the fair treatment of students and teaching in ways that empower students to deal effectively with others and the problems they face. Mostly her critical reflection was framed with reference to individuals. While Amy's reflection did, on occasion, take into account the broader social conditions surrounding educational practice, critical conceptions of democracy did not find a prominent place in her developing sense of purpose for teaching social studies. Nor did she come to view social studies as imbued with a responsibility for democratic citizenship education.

Case Two: Leonard

Initial Frames

As with Amy, the ideas about teaching Leonard brought to Methods were steeped in a sense of the fundamentally moral basis of teaching. He did not talk about teaching as a technical enterprise concerned with delivering a pre-determined curriculum. Rather he described teaching as an occupation whose purpose is to help people through "the complexities of everyday life," and he acknowledged that the reasons children should be in schools are fraught with "a lot of moral suasion" (interview, 1-22-96).

Education's moral foundations were apparent to Leonard before he began Methods. Furthermore, he also understood that schools play a role in influencing society. He believed, "Schools are a tremendously conservative agency of society. They're one of the most conservative" (interview, 1-22-96). As a teacher, he did not see himself beholden to conservative interests. His job was to help people see alternative world-views, understand interconnections among social phenomena, and appreciate the complexity of social life. By teaching to these aims, he hoped to influence the larger social order. Because Leonard had considered both the moral dimensions of teaching and the relationship of schooling to wider social contexts, he was, in a sense, preconditioned to Methods' emphasis on critically reflective teaching when he began the semester.

While both the term and its meaning were new to him, Leonard appeared to have a headstart on some of the understandings necessary for critically reflective teaching. For example, he had heard the term democratic education before. He offered a definition:

Democratic education, as I understand it, is allowing, encouraging, evoking, as many voices as possible in a classroom, in order, to sort of, to bring into discussion sort of the current issues of the day, in the context of people's own experience and lived reality. (interview. 1-22-96)

Here Leonard first brings up an idea that he would continue to assert for the rest of the semester, the idea that, as he would say, “everyone has a voice.” He believed that democracy was not really about the rule of the majority, “but it’s the idea that everyone has a voice. And that democracy... is a way of encouraging, protecting, amplifying, I guess, in some ways, those voices that don’t get heard” (interview, 1-22-96).

However he understood democratic education, he did not draw upon this understanding to explain his role as a social studies teacher. Like Amy, Leonard did not start the methods semester with anything approaching a reasoned, comprehensive rationale for his work in this field. He could communicate some ideas about the purpose of social studies, but these were vague and unconnected to a coherent organizational framework. On the first day of class, he wrote, “Social studies is about living in real situations, learning from personal experience how to maneuver in the world and culture around us” (assignment, 1-22-96). Whether this view provides practical guidance in making teaching decisions remained an open question. Yet his critical mindset regarding education, society, and the relationship between the two seemed to position him well for the theoretical orientation of the course.

Development over the Semester

Like Amy, Leonard developed a conceptual understanding of critically reflective teaching by the end of the first four weeks of Methods. He had gone from guessing that critically reflective teaching had something to do with self-reflection to advancing an awareness of its moral and ethical focus. He also understood how critical reflection stood apart from other, non-critical forms of reflection. He realized he had not made this distinction at the start of the semester:

I think critically reflective teaching is the real catcher... I felt the reflective dimension asked the question: How could I have done that better? How could I have dealt with that situation so that it didn’t go that way? But then there’s the critical part, and the critically reflective, it’s actually the critically reflective part is: Why did I do it that way? Why did I teach that lesson? How did my biases show through when I was dealing with that disruptive kid? (interview, 3-19-96)

Not only was Leonard able to express his understanding of critically reflective teaching, the construct became an interpretive tool he could use to make sense of his field placements. In both practicum journals, he cited evidence of teaching practices that he characterized

as both reflective and non-reflective. He came to understand that critically reflective teaching involved consideration of the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching, but at no point during the semester did I find evidence that he ever extended his conception to include social reconstructionist emphases, such as reflecting on the social conditions of schooling and teaching for a more democratic society.

Although Leonard did not expand his definition of critically reflective teaching to include such concerns, this is not to suggest that his own thinking about teaching did not take such matters into consideration. In his assignments and interviews, there were instances of Leonard's thinking that could be characterized as critically reflective in the social reconstructionist sense featured in *Methods*. For example, in the first four weeks he was asked to put together four lesson ideas to share with his classmates. The topics he selected for three of his four lessons reveal Leonard's belief that curricula can be used to raise critical issues. His first idea was a small group activity called "Race and Politics." His second asked students to write a journal contrasting the "myth of war" with the personal experiences of people who have survived combat. He titled his third lesson idea "Indigenous People of the World." Here students researched ethnic groups chosen from various regions around the world and answered the question: "Why is there so much diversity in the world?" (assignment 1-31-96). Each of these lessons demonstrate Leonard's thinking about what counts as worthwhile learning in social studies.

Similarly, the final unit plan Leonard turned in at the end of the semester was intended as an introduction to culture utilizing various forms of literature to "help place the reader in other cultures via their imaginations and provide access to worlds and cultures inaccessible to direct contact" (assignment, 5-14-96). The plan was incomplete, vague in its rationale, and somewhat lacking in coherence, but Leonard did attempt to incorporate features that shed light on his critically reflective approach to teaching. He hoped this unit would teach tolerance for other cultures. He also sought to "provide opportunities for reflective, critical and skeptical thinking about other cultures and one's own." At one point in the unit students are introduced to "cultural variables like gender, race and socio-economic class" as categories for use in analyzing particular cultures. These features evidence Leonard's critical reflection in that they position him as a teacher who thinks about how educational practice can reduce intolerance, prejudice, and ethnocentrism among students.

More evidence of Leonard's critical reflection is provided by his accounts of his field experiences. In his first placement, he was critical of the manner in which teachers failed to take advantage of the diversity present in their classrooms. He described how student characteristics, such as race, sexuality, home lives, and socio-economic status,

were issues teachers discussed in the teachers' lounge but were not considered in the context of the classroom. He also railed against the shame-based methods of discipline he saw. At his second practicum site, Leonard was struck by the emphasis placed on the one, correct interpretation of historical events. He commented:

The oft quoted remark about teaching students to be good citizens comes true in a backhanded way by producing a climate where simple answers predominate, dissent is discouraged, the American way is championed, and all others, if they don't agree are fools, stupid, or traitors. (assignment, 4-30-96)

Leonard's critically reflective approach to thinking about teaching led him to consider the hidden messages teachers were sending to their students, and he did not like what he saw:

Teacher was the expert— lots of talk, lots of information, some of it helpful... Yet very one sided. Always favor Israel over Palestinians, always favor the US over any other country, always favor the government over dissenting voices. Militaristic images favored. Violence advocated as legitimate. Downplaying concerns for human rights and justice....No toleration for difference... Young men encouraged to speak, young women teased and ridiculed for their responses. It made me angry and sad and frustrated...(assignment 4-30-96)

He talked about trying to introduce what he called "critical reflection" into the one lesson he taught on Bosnia-Herzegovina by having students discuss the conflict while assuming different points of view. His experience with this lesson appeared to push his conception of critical reflective teaching in a more social reconstructionist direction:

I believe critically reflective teaching can be more than just asking why I taught this particular lesson or what are the ethical implications of a particular study. If the boundaries of issues, the intersection of values can be raised as the lesson itself, then social/political/cultural issues and concerns will be built into the classroom. (assignment, 4-30-96)

Though there were numerous examples of critical reflection in his accounts, it would be misleading to suggest that critically reflective teaching was his primary concern. On the contrary, he provided a list of

unanswered questions this practicum raised for him, and none of these dealt with critically reflective issues. Instead he wanted to know more about practical issues such as “how to make the rough jumps and starts (like taking roll, dealing with last minute announcements) disappear” (assignment, 3-19-96). Nevertheless, critically reflective thinking was a part of Leonard’s experience.

While Leonard was able to incorporate the idea of critical reflection into his thinking about teaching early in the semester, democratic education was an idea that resisted such assimilation to the very end. He began and ended the semester articulating democratic education with reference to encouraging everyone’s voice. The result of all the attention paid to democratic education was to leave him with a greater sense of appreciation for the complexity of the idea, but the core idea establishing Leonard’s understanding of the term did not change. In much the same way, Leonard’s rationale for teaching and learning in social studies did not undergo a major transformation during the semester either. As he noted, “I think I’ve developed and deepened my understanding of social studies, but I’ve not radically changed the focus or the direction” (interview, 3-19-96).

Summary

Over the methods semester, Leonard learned the meaning of critically reflective teaching and displayed his ability to employ the term in analyzing school practice. There were numerous instances of Leonard’s critical reflection about teaching throughout the four months of the course. Speaking one’s voice, listening to others, seeking alternative viewpoints, and making oneself open to the complexity of living—these ideas were part of Leonard’s thinking about teaching as he entered the class, and they all reflect his critical social and educational orientation. Methods led Leonard to think about these ideas more deeply but did not direct him to develop them with reference to democratic education. Nor did he end the semester with a greatly enhanced sense of social studies’ role in the democratic project of public schooling. Despite the critically reflective predisposition he seemed to possess when Methods started, Leonard’s educational orientation resisted assimilation of the social reconstructionist emphases planned for the course.

Case Three: Nick

Initial Frames

More than Amy and Leonard, Nick arrived at the start of Methods speaking about education in a way that demonstrated a coherent integration of his views on the value of the examined life with his views on the role of education in society. This integration was the re-

sult of what Nick described as “a personal quest” begun six years earlier as a sophomore in college:

I think it was my struggle with who I am... in answering life's questions, the bigger life questions— What are we doing here? How are we supposed to interact with other people?— sort of a more spiritual approach to understanding the world that has ultimately dictated how I look at any social question or any political question. (interview, 1-22-96)

Ever since then he has involved himself in a search for answers, a search that has led him “toward philosophy, and psychology, and religion as different ways to approach these questions” (interview, 1-22-96).

His quest for understanding was steeped in moral and ethical consideration. Not surprisingly then, the resulting views he formulated on education were critically reflective. He was very aware of the role schools play in shaping society, and he felt school practices should be directed by teachers who acknowledge this role. He believed that schools should prepare students as active, caring, and open individuals, and in so doing, schools would make their contribution to a more just social order. He explained:

I believe the individual and the classroom, I think it's a microcosm of the larger community, or what's going on outside. So the classroom reflects the outside community as well as what's going on in the classroom... And I think you ultimately change society by influencing individuals in the way that they engage in the world. So if you have a situation in the classroom where students become more open, and more engaging, and are maybe more caring and compassionate, then I think ultimately you will change society in a positive way. (interview, 1-22-96)

Even though he could speak about the relationship between the individual and larger social order, his emphasis was clearly on the former. He was cognizant of how his teaching might impact society, but his primary motivation was influencing individual students.

Perhaps more than any other component of his educational outlook, Nick's description of the ways in which schools influence students demonstrates the depth of his critical reflection. Nick believed the stated curriculum reflects only a small part of what students learn in schools. Students also learn from the life of the school, from the quality and kinds of relationships found in daily interactions among

themselves, teachers, and administrators. He was sensitive to the hidden curriculum and could see its manifestation in school practices.

Though he had not encountered the idea of critically reflective teaching prior to *Methods*, he had given thought to democratic education. Early on, he offered a three-part conception of the term. First he referred to a democratic classroom, where students have a voice in making decisions in a given class. Second, he spoke of the democratic school, where there is shared decision-making among all school participants, students and faculty alike. He spoke of his recent day-long visit to an alternative school "based on the Summerhill model" (interview, 1-22-96) as an example of democratic education in this sense. Third, he pointed to a more general definition of democratic education that addresses the relationship between school practices and the realization of a more democratic society. He observed:

I think that it's almost becoming common knowledge now, that, at least in academic circles, that if you want a democratic society, you have to have a democratic school. Or you have to have a more democratic system, if you want to facilitate that type of behavior once they are out of school... How do we foster democratic type behavior so that when the students leave they can be, can fit into a democracy, a system where they have to make choices and decisions? (interview, 1-22-96)

All three senses of democratic education appealed to Nick, and he hoped that *Methods* would present further opportunities to refine his thinking about what each meant for his own practice as a teacher. Looking forward, he noted, "I would love to be in a situation where I could utilize democratic principles" (interview, 1-22-96).

Though Nick could express a fairly articulate conception of democratic education and talk about its importance to his views on education, the idea was not the core notion forming his sense of purpose as a teacher. His interest was in the actualization of student potential, in helping students initiate their own quest for knowledge of who they are and how they should live. He was less concerned with preparing democratic citizens than he was with preparing people awakened to the value of exploring who they are and how they relate to others.

Such was his rationale for teaching. For teaching social studies, Nick simply did not have a rationale at the start of the semester. Nor did he view this as a serious problem. He found the separation of disciplines upon which the contemporary school curriculum is based inherently artificial, and preferred to view schooling as a project integrating all disciplines for the purpose of helping students understand themselves and their relations to others. He happened to be in a social

studies certification program for two reasons— academic credits and personal interest.

Development over the Semester

My analysis of Nick's critical reflection caused me to struggle with when to interpret thinking about teaching as critically reflective. Nick's course assignments, journals, and interviews did make occasional reference to broader social conditions of schooling, but more often they made reference to the individual. How did Nick's emphasis on the individual fit with my social reconstructionist conception of critically reflective teaching, referenced as it was to notions of a more just and democratic society? Nick's own words helped me answer this question. He explained:

I see my being critically reflective would not occur as much on a societal level as it would be, would occur on an individual level, in how we interact with other human beings. So that, talking about society, and about justice, and about what's right and what's wrong, to me, occurs on an individual basis, individual reactions between human beings. (interview, 6-9-96)

Nick's developmentalist focus on individual growth so permeated his educational views that looking for evidence of critical reflection required an analytical turn inward. While he kept returning to the individual, there was always an implicit (though occasionally explicit), and fairly sophisticated, theory of the individual's relationship to society supporting his reflection. Concerns for social justice, democracy, and equality were very much a part of his thinking, but his interest was in how these concerns played out in his relationship with his own students. For these reasons, I was able to identify critical reflection in much of his work.

Utilizing this somewhat expanded conception of critical reflection, examples of Nick's critical reflection abound in the assignments he completed for class. In one assignment, for example, he listed sample questions that he felt were worth asking in a social studies class:

Why did the settlers feel like it was necessary to destroy the Native Americans? Why has the history of the world been measured and divided by wars and conflicts? Why, in an age of wealth and prosperity, do some people have so much and some people have so little? Why do people seem driven to keep acquiring wealth while other people starve? (assignment, 1-30-96)

He also advocated asking such questions of the students—why do they feel they need to be rich? Why do they get into conflicts? These questions stem from a combination of his own views about human development and his assessment of the social problems taking place around him.

His lesson planning attempts throughout the semester also revealed evidence of critical reflection. The topics he chose for an assignment early in the semester are examples. For a lesson about the Industrial Revolution, he wanted to counter standard textbook accounts of the period: “Generally, from what I’ve seen, the textbook will describe the IR as the greatest thing that has happened to the world” (assignment, 1-31-96). To counter the textbook view, he would have students read excerpts from a story about Luddite revolts in this period. For another lesson in this same assignment, he hoped to raise the question of meritocracy by having students “describe the controversy over the use of IQ testing in the United States.” These examples convey a sense of what Nick felt was worth studying in a social studies curriculum, and they both emphasize helping students critique standard interpretations typically conveyed in social studies classes.

In addition to his responses to class assignments, Nick’s observations and thoughts about his field experiences reveal numerous instances of critical reflection, and in a few cases even critically reflective teaching. In describing his first placement, at a large suburban high school, he noted his overall impression of the school was as a “massive, mechanical and largely impersonal system” (assignment, 3-18-96). He was especially concerned that the school appeared unable to help “those students who begin to fall through the cracks” (assignment, 3-18-96), and he noticed that a disproportionate number of these students were minorities. He measured the school against a multiculturalism standard and pronounced it a failure. When asked to provide evidence of his own critically reflective teaching, he spoke of thinking about these ill-served students in planning his lesson. He explained:

If I look at social justice and democratic education, if I look at what moral aspects of teaching, if I look at it in a critical way, I did that, and I saw students on the periphery... [E]veryone seems blind to what’s going on with these students... So in actual deliberations about how I was teaching in a democratic fashion, what I attempted to do was form relationships with students mainly, and to be open and engaging, and I think that’s the best you can do. (interview 3-20-96)

Nick continued these same themes in reports of his second field experience at a small town middle school. If anything his critique was even more pointed. His analysis of the special education program, entitled "The Aspirin and Bandage for the Disease-ridden School," captured his anger about the treatment given to those students designated as having "learning difficulties." His observations led him to label the special education program at this school as a "sham" that serves to prop up a broken system. He wrote:

The purpose of this program is to give special attention to students with 'problems,' so that they can get the ridiculous and meaningless work done in their classes... As a result, the school system can remain guilt-free and can continue the shameful process that is called educating the students. (assignment, 4-30-96)

Regular classrooms fared little better in Nick's assessment. His cooperating teacher let Nick know that "the emphasis was placed on the material in hand and not the ideas in the minds of the students" (assignment, 4-30-96). Here and elsewhere, there are numerous other examples of Nick's critical reflection over the methods semester drawn from his practicum journals, interview responses, and course assignments.

The body of evidence collected over the semester of Nick's critical reflection revealed that Methods had only negligible impact on his views of democratic education and the importance of a rationale for social studies. Nick appreciated the focus on democratic citizenship and social transformation for the ways in which it pushed him to clarify, if not extend, his own sense of mission. Ultimately he found himself interpreting these constructs utilizing his initial framework of concern for the individual. Given the centrality of critical thinking, reflective inquiry, decision making, or some other such variant, to efforts at social studies rationale building (Hunt & Metcalf, 1955; Engle, 1963; Oliver & Shaver, 1966; Engle & Ochoa, 1988), Nick's lack of apparent concern for rational deliberation is especially notable. Methods challenged him to think deeply about its importance, but critical thinking never became a defining aim of his developing sense of practice.

Similarly, at the end of the semester, Nick looked at democratic education in much the same way as he did at the start. Throughout, he maintained that democratic citizenship education is furthered more through exposing students to just, compassionate classroom and school environments than it is through a curriculum emphasizing civic duties, skills (e.g. critical deliberation), and democratic values. He noted, "It's not going to matter as much if they're voting or not voting, and

who they are voting for, as much as— Are they treating other people with respect and dignity?” (interview, 6-9-96).

Finally, his self-identity as a teacher remained untethered to the field of social studies. Despite the explicit attention paid in *Methods* to articulating a sense of purpose as a social studies teacher, Nick’s ideas about the kinds of learning experiences he wanted to provide students were not drawn from his thinking about the place of social studies in the modern school curriculum. As the semester proceeded, he was pushed to reconsider his sense of educational purpose in relation to social studies. He claimed that issues and questions raised in *Methods* helped him to clarify his thinking about social studies, but he made little progress in the end on developing a rationale for social studies.

Summary

Nick began the methods semester with a developed and thoughtful understanding of what he wanted to accomplish as teacher. This understanding, rooted in his personal theory of individual growth, did not change its substance during the semester. However, Nick did claim that his initial set of ideas about teaching were refined and deepened through the semester. These ideas led him to think about course assignments, readings, class meetings, and his field experiences in ways that I have interpreted as critically reflective. Though difficult to quantify, evidence of critical reflection seemed more liberally dispersed in Nick’s data set than in Amy and Leonard’s. Yet his critical reflection usually centered on the individual student rather than the social conditions of schooling. The emphasis of *Methods* on critical democracy as a rationale for teaching social studies led to no major transformation in his thinking about educational practice.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, I attempted to put forth an answer to the following question: What was the extent, nature, and development of critical reflection among students in a secondary social studies methods course in a research university secondary social studies teacher education program? My intention with this research was to go beyond an impressionistic appraisal of the methods class experience and toward an empirically based investigation of the possibilities for promoting critical reflection in this setting. Analysis across the three cases yields an account of preservice teacher development that provides somewhat promising findings upon which to build and, perhaps more importantly, raises further questions for those interested in the role played by the social studies methods course in democratic teacher education.

First and foremost, this investigation revealed evidence of both critical reflection and critically reflective teaching among the three cases. Each participant demonstrated critical reflection about teaching at various points during the semester. Such thinking was not predominant, but was present nevertheless. The findings of this study contradict the notion that secondary preservice students are incapable of critical reflection at this stage of their professional development. Certainly these three preservice social studies teachers were quite capable of thinking about the work of teaching in critical terms. The moral and ethical foundations of their practice were not only apparent to Amy, Leonard, and Nick, but were a vital aspect of their reflection on practice. As they thought about teaching, each expressed a critique informed by moral and ethical concerns. Furthermore the methods course appeared to help them develop a language to articulate their thinking about teaching, especially with regard to the idea of critical reflection. The study thus raises the question of how the critical reflection observed during this semester suggests a basis upon which to encourage preservice teachers toward more sophisticated analyses of the moral and ethical dimensions of educational practice.

On the other hand, the emphasis in the course on critical democratic citizenship led to no discernible or substantive transformation of any participants' educational views. At times, the ideas of critical democracy led Amy, Leonard, and Nick to think about the intersections among educational practice, broader social conditions, and democratic values. Yet they seemed to do so only infrequently. Mainstream rationale work in social studies, social reconstructionism, and Deweyan notions of democracy did not appear to make a significant impact on how they thought about teaching. They all reported developing a richer sense of the meanings of democratic education, but these newly-formed meanings remained at the periphery of their attention throughout the semester.

As well, Amy, Leonard, and Nick did not develop a comprehensive rationale for their work as social studies teachers. Indeed, the very idea of connecting their critical reflection to their developing identities as social studies teachers never took hold in the course of the semester. In part, the idea failed to take hold because they did not tend to associate their identities as teachers to the field of social studies. They were teachers in general before they were teachers of social studies. Connecting with students, promoting individual development, introducing complexity—these were more important aims than developing citizens who are capable participants in democratic life.

Thus a cross-case analysis suggests the possibility of promoting critical reflection among methods course students and the challenge of directing this reflection toward consideration of the theory (critical or otherwise) underlying social studies as a part of the school curricu-

lum. The observation has been made before that social studies professors are inescapably wedded to the idea the notion that beginning teachers must think long and hard about why they are teaching social studies before they might think effectively about how they are teaching social studies (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Shaver, 1997). This study supports the claim that this concern is not shared by preservice teachers. How then might questions of critical democracy be raised more profitably in a methods course? How might the surrounding, broader teacher education program support such inquiry? What role could field experiences play to push reflection on critically reflective issues of the strict-sense variety?

Ultimately, how one interprets the results of this study may have a great deal to do with the assumptions one makes about the development of teacher thinking across the span of a career spent in the schools. There is little argument on the desirability of teachers taking into account the moral and ethical dimensions of practice. There is perhaps a little more disagreement—from those who would have teaching understood as largely an act of technical proficiency—on the desirability of teachers reflecting on their work in relation to broader social, political, and cultural realities. In either case though, as Valli (1993) points out, typical secondary school environments are not especially congenial to fostering critical reflection during the inservice years. Thus, preservice teacher education, including of course the methods class, may represent the best opportunity to cultivate critically reflective approaches to social studies teaching and learning. Under this view, at the very least, cross-case analysis of these preservice teachers calls for examination of the pedagogical approaches and program features that facilitate this important work. As well, the study raises the question of what will happen to these beginning teachers as they move from their preservice education and into their beginning years as teachers.

Is critically reflective teaching a realistic expectation for those first learning to teach? This research gives some cause for a tentative answer in the affirmative. As a limited and exploratory investigation of critically reflective teacher education in social studies, my analysis of Amy, Leonard, and Nick's experiences over the methods semester indicates that promoting critical reflection and critically reflective teaching is possible, though challenging. Clearly more is known about the theoretical justification for making critical reflection an aim of preservice teacher preparation than how this aim is actually accomplished. For this reason, social studies teacher education for critically reflective teaching presents a rich and unexplored research agenda. If the assumption is true that democratic citizenship education requires critically reflective teachers, then this agenda deserves greater attention.

Note

¹ The conceptualization of action research used here emphasizes practitioners pursuing formalized investigation in the context of their own practice. In this case, my teaching provided the study site. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) define teacher research as "systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers" (p. 5). Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) define action research as systematic inquiry by practitioners into their own practice, usually proceeding by way of a spiraling, recursive series of at least these four steps— plan, act, observe, and reflect. Variations on these terms abound. There is a significant debate over what should and should not be included under these headings. For example, questions center on the purpose of the inquiry, whether or not collaboration is an essential feature, who benefits from the research, the use to which resulting knowledge is put, and the intended audience. The research described here uses the term action research to emphasize that I was both teacher and researcher. Though this research led to changes in my own practice, the purpose of this article is to report on a different concern—the development of critical reflection in preservice social studies teachers in a methods class.

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Critical History: Implications for History/Social Studies Education

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Abstract

Addressing the possibilities opened up for the teaching of social studies by a growing body of critical literature in and about history, this paper examines ways in which history/social studies educators might respond responsibly to the challenges posed by that literature in order to thoughtfully re-consider why we learn history, what we do (and could do) with it, and for what (and whose) purposes. With much of what was previously taken for granted in the poetics and politics of history now under scrutiny, this paper explores what it might mean to teach history that is aware of its construction and what opportunities such an awareness might afford the pedagogical practice through which students not only come to know a past but also to realize a present and a future.

Introduction

In the last twenty years, developments in historiography, intellectual history, and philosophy of history—both influencing and influenced by literary theory, postmodernism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, feminism, postcolonial theory, hermeneutics, phenomenology, anthropology, and psychoanalysis—have redefined the boundaries of history, of historical accounts, of what counts as “historical,” and of how (and what) history counts. Putting many of history’s taken-for-granted procedures into question and challenging the classical notions of truth, reality, and objectivity, scholars such as Hayden White, Dominick LaCapra, F. R. Ankersmit, Joan Wallach Scott, and Robert Berkhofer, among others, have raised significant questions regarding historians’ claims to knowledge. Scrutinizing the idealized version of history as a picture-perfect presentation of an unmediated, authorless past, they have advocated a heightened awareness of history’s literary and creative functions thus, returning the modernist historian from the objective side-lines to the very centre of what could,

at best, be defined as partial, subjective, and partisan history making. Exploring history as a socially constructed set of conventions designed to discipline knowledge and knowing in particular ways, these scholars have subverted history against itself in order to question (and highlight) the politics and ideologies embedded in the production, circulation, and legitimation of history, of historical texts.

While the excitement and enthusiasm in which this critical literature has blasted history open and ruptured its silences has not been reciprocated equally by most historians and history educators, the issues raised and summoned into the discussion in, on, and about history by the infusion of philosophy, poststructuralism, and literary and critical theory can no longer be avoided in the study of history, especially considering the responsibility history education has towards enabling students to critically engage and actively change the world we, avoiding such issues, have created.

How should educators respond responsibly to the challenges posed by the rhetorical, reflexive, and linguistic turns? Indeed, what are the implications (and complications) of critical history for the educational endeavour? How might critical history allow us to think differently about what we currently do in history classrooms as well as conceive ways of engaging history differently? How do the questions raised by the "critical revolution" enable us to re-consider our relationship to the past, present, and future, to re-think symbolic environments and discursive practices through which we come to know who we are and how we got there? In what ways can these questions and the responses they raise invigorate us to thoughtfully re-engage why we learn history, what we do (and could do) with it, and for what purposes?

Attempting to respond to these questions, this paper is divided into two main parts. The first focuses on the discipline of history and explores the movement from traditional, modern to poststructural, postmodern notions of how historians come to know and tell the past. Its purpose is not to provide a comprehensive or exhaustive account of any of those positions, especially, perhaps, with regard to the latter—the postmodern, poststructural—which are used to problematize the former. While each of the scholars cited from those latter perspectives has put forward different challenges to traditional history, I focus on the commonalities among their critiques (hence the term "critical" history) which have all called into question the innocence of the traditional paradigms of historical knowledge and ways of knowing.

The second part of the paper focuses on history education. Building upon critical theories articulated in the first section, this part of the paper engages what (and how) it might mean to teach history which is both the study and practice of interpretation (Scott, 1996); where the investigation of interpretation becomes "part of the object of knowl-

edge and itself becomes an object" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 143); when we no longer dream "of deciphering a truth or an origin which is free from freeplay" (Derrida, 1972, p. 264. cf. Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 166).

From "Traditional" History to Problematizing Traditions of History

Questions about the relationship between discovery and creation, between "truth" and "fiction" in historical representations, Hamilton (1996) reminds us, have underpinned the discipline of history since the days of Herodotus—the "father of history"—and his immediate successor, Thucydides. Representing divergent styles of history, Herodotus tended toward overt fiction while Thucydides attempted the construction of actual documentary accounts. However, while criticizing Herodotus and other poets and chroniclers for embellishing myths and fables in their historical representations, Hamilton adds, Thucydides' own version of what he defines as a "realistic," "documentary" history is not void of embellishments and fiction. In describing the Peloponnesian war, for example, Thucydides provides speeches which, in his own words, are "given in the language in which, *it seemed to me*, the several speakers *would* express . . . the sentiments *most befitting* the occasion" (Thucydides, 1972, pp. 47-48, cf. Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 10. my emphasis). The inability to differentiate between *record* and *story*, between fact, theory, and fiction in historical texts, and discussions of the appropriate degrees to which historians negotiate the probable from the possible and the possible from the probable as they give meaning to the past, do not seem surprising in the context of Ancient Greece. "Memory—Mnemosyne—after all, was the mother of the Muses, and the leading muse, Clio, presided over history" (Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 9.).

Even as late as the early nineteenth century, White (1978) points out, the division between history and story, between historian, poet, and philosopher, and between art and science was blurred. Intellectuals in all fields willingly crossed boundaries dividing one discipline from another. "Men like Michelet and Tocqueville," adds White,

are properly designated as historians only by their subject matter, not by their methods. Insofar as their method alone is concerned, they are just as easily designated as scientists, artists, or philosophers. The same can be said of "historians" like Ranke and Niebuhr, or "novelists" like Stendhal and Balzac, of "philosophers" like Hegel and Marx, and of "poets" like Heine and Lamartine. (p. 42)

Hegel, Balzac, Nietzsche, and Tocqueville, according to White (1978), all rejected the idea of the historian's "innocent eye" and stressed the active, inventive aspect of historians' "inquiry" (p. 54). Yet, since the second half of the nineteenth century, when historians, according to White got wedded to conceptions of "what art, science, and philosophy *ought to be*" (p. 42), history increasingly estranged itself from art and philosophy and, by affiliating itself with "science," progressively became "the refuge of those 'sane' men who excel at finding the simple in the complex and the familiar in the strange" (p. 50).

Breaking with philosophy, literature, and theory, and increasingly tying its scholarly commitments to science, this latter version of history worked to separate theory from story, fact from fiction and divorce writers from the world they inscribed. Knowledge seemed predefined, rational, and absolute and was "out there" waiting to be discovered, accurately, through the adequate application of the "scientific method." Facts became a priority, serving the double role of evidence and guarantor. Historians no longer stood between the text and the past but, rather, employing an unbiased historical method, illuminated the past and represented it "as it was." Laying out the matter as it is, Southgate (1996) explains, implied

that there is a past reality or truth, waiting to be discovered and described. The historian just has to clear away the darkness and confusion, behind which that past sometimes regrettably takes refuge, so that it can be seen in all its proper light and clarity. Admittedly, there may be complications, and certain precautions have to be taken: data must be approached without prejudices; facts must be clearly differentiated from opinion; evidence must be accepted only from impartial witnesses, and duly subjected to critical analysis; objectivity must be maintained, with any personal prejudices properly suppressed; and the record subsequently written must be scrupulously accurate. But given a properly professional approach, it should be possible to learn and then convey the truth of what is out there waiting to be discovered as the past. (p. 12; see also Smith, 1994, p. 108; Appleby, et. al., 1994, p. 89; Ankersmit, 1994, pp. 45, 172; LaCapra, 1985, pp. 42, p. 117)

Denouncing their predecessors' emphasis on rhetorical and narrative skills, the 19th-century dispassionate, all-seeing, scientific historians (Appleby, et al., 1994, p. 89) regarded history a pretextual effort and highlighted their new role as researchers, not writers. The newly constructed dichotomy between science and rhetoric, method and language, claims LaCapra (1985), induced

a tendency to perceive rhetoric as “merely” rhetorical and to understand scientific truth in terms of a rather blind rhetoric of anti-rhetoric. This tendency, which defines science as the adversary or antithesis of rhetoric, has often been conjoined with a defence of a “plain style” that attempts or pretends to be entirely transparent to its object. (p. 42)

“If the ‘artistic’ side of history entered the picture at all,” LaCapra (1985) adds, it was

through the narrow gate of a rather perfunctory idea of “good style” in writing ... “Good style,” when it did not simply occult the problem of “voice,” restricted the historian to an “objective” description and analysis of facts. “Objectivity” implied the dominance of an impersonal or “voiceless” voice, and “subjective” interventions (marked by the use of the first-person pronoun) had to be largely confined to a preface or conclusion. More occasional interventions of “non-objective” tendencies in the body of the historical text threatened to disrupt established rules of decorum, and anything approximating a more complex “dialogue” between past and present (or historian and “documentary” evidence) seemed to be ruled out *ab initio*. (p. 117)

Reality and interpretation, then, claims Scott (1996) were “posited as separate and separable entities,” where the legitimacy of a historical account rested upon its faithfulness to a reality that lay outside or pre-existed interpretation. “When history is provided as ‘truth’ and authorless, when [quoting Barthes, 1986] ‘there is no sign referring to the sender of the historical message, history seems to *tell itself*’” (p. 131. cf. Scott, *ibid.*). To achieve this effect, Scott adds, “[n]ot only must the voice of the historian be rendered neutral,” but the writing must also equate “referent [the “real”] and signified [meaning].” As a result, explains Scott, “the troubling intervention of language (the presence of the signified) in the representation of the real is denied. The signifier [language] is taken as a faithful reflection of the referent; signified and referent thus become one” (*ibid.*).

Critical History: The Past “As It Is”

With the advent of postmodernism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, feminism, and postcolonialism, all areas of intellec-

tual life have been rendered problematic. Exploring science not as a neutral enterprise but as "encoded with values," a creator of culture (Appleby, et al., 1994, p. 16), concepts such as "facts," "reality," and "objectivity" no longer seemed as unproblematic as they once did (Southgate, 1996, p. x). And with science losing its innocence, the idealized version of history was also undermined.

Seeing discourse "not simply a 'mirror' to a separate 'reality'" but as "part of that reality" (Corfield, 1991, p. 27, cf. Zamitto, 1993, p. 796), critical historiographers, intellectual historians, and philosophers of history over the past two decades have advocated that "the very definition of history must take a more reflexive meaning, one that shows its socially constructed nature," and a self-consciousness of its own creation (Berkhofer, 1995, p. 8). Exposing what Leitch (1986) calls "the 'made up' quality of knowledge" (cf. Fish, 1994, p. 233), scholars such as Hayden White (1973, 1978), Dominic LaCapra (1985, 1994), Joan Wallach Scott (1988, 1996), Robert Berkhofer (1988, 1995), and F. R. Ankersmit (1983, 1994), among others, have challenged history's authoritative and unproblematic discourse, thus "spotlighting the politics of historical methodology, the politics of the viewpoint from which history is seen and told, and the politics of the discipline as a professional community" (Berkhofer, 1995, p. 8).

By scrutinizing the notion of the "real," these critical scholars have invited us

to see history not as a record of the past, more or less faithful to the facts, nor yet as an interpretation answerable to the evidence even if it does not start from it, but as an invention, or fiction, of historians themselves, an inscription on the past rather than a reflection of it, an act of designation masquerading as a true-life story. [They have asked] us to consider history as a literary form, on a par with, or at any rate exhibiting affinities to, other kinds of imaginative writing—narrative or descriptive, comic or realist, as the case may be. (Samuel, 1992, pp. 220–21. cf. Jenkins, 1995, p. 36)

Although "traditional" history had proclaimed itself the story of the past, the past and history, as Jenkins (1991) reminds us, are not stitched together. Rather, "they float free of each other, they are ages and miles apart" (p. 5). Building upon such a differentiation, Seixas (1993a) claims "history is only a discourse about the past, a story constructed to make meaning for us in the present" (p. 307). Arguing that history and the past are not one and the same, that history is always both already more and less than the past itself, Lowenthal (1985) proclaims the past "a foreign country," never to be accurately depicted via textualization.

The very process of constructing the (unknowable) past, claims Lowenthal, demands creative changes to make it convincing and intelligible: "history conflates, compresses, exaggerates; unique moments of the past stand out, uniformities and minutiae fade away" (p. 214).

Neither the past nor history, therefore, tell themselves. Writing the past is a discursive process—"a deliberate selection, ordering, and evaluation of past events, experiences, and processes" (Kaye, 1991, p. 71). Always positioned to tell a particular story from a particular time, place, and perspective historians story the past in ways that promote certain understandings and interpretations over others. Meanings given to the past are never objective or neutral; they are always positioned and positioning. They are not, as Jenkins (1991) points out, "meanings intrinsic in the past but meanings given to the past from outside(rs)" (p. 18). As such, claims White (1978), history is simultaneously "a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation" (p. 51). Yet, as White adds, too often discussions of historical discourse conventionally (and conveniently) distinguish between facts and interpretation. What such a distinction obscures, according to White,

is the difficulty of discriminating within the discourse between these two levels. It is not the case that a fact is one thing and its interpretation another. The fact is presented where and how it is in the discourse in order to sanction the interpretation to which it is meant to contribute. And the interpretation derives its force of plausibility from the order and manner in which the facts are presented in the discourse. The discourse itself is the actual combination of facts and meaning . . . (p. 107)

Since discourse is the means of engaging the past, and since no representation can take place outside of discourse or textualization, history itself, no less than literature, claims Spiegel (1990, p. 62), participates in the creation of the "real" it purports to represent. "The historian's project of recovering past realities and presenting them 'truly' or even 'fairly' is thus a delusion," adds Cronon (1992, p. 1368). In narrating the past, historians cannot avoid fictionalizing for, as Roth (1995), exploring White's writing of *Metahistory* (1973), points out, historians do not find stories in the past but form the past into stories (p. 141).

While historians may use methodologies and discourses different than those used by writers of fiction to emplot their (his)stories, they nevertheless employ discursive practices and devices, conventions of representation, and modes of narrativity common to those utilized by writers of literature. The "difference between a historical and a fictional account," in which "fiction is conceived as the imagin-

able and history as the actual," states White (1978, p. 98), must give place to the recognition that such differences "are matters of degree rather than of kind" (p. 78). Historical narratives, adds White, are "verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences" (p. 82). The artificially-maintained difference between history and literature thus results not as much from actual practice but from claims made about such practice. For as Berkhofer (1995) offers, the difference is "not so much that the former deal[s] with real things and the latter do[es] not . . . but that history purports to tell only the real things and to refer only to a real, not imagined, world" (p. 68).

While the challenges posed by the above literature have, to borrow from Roth (1995), done much to refocus the conversation in and about history and "to wake those who think [traditionally] about the connection of past and present from their dogmatic slumbers," we must, ask, as Roth does, where this "leaves us when we are thus awoken. Do we in fact have any more power to deal with the world around us than we did in our dreams?" (p. 71). My response, as will be illustrated in the remainder of this paper, is a resounding "Yes." (Less enthusiastic perspectives on these issues can be found, for example, in Hutcheon, 1988; Palmer, 1990; Zammito, 1993). For to claim that history is produced by the interpretive operations and mechanisms of the discipline or to point to the various ways in which it achieves its authority, as Scott (1996) points out, is neither "a shameful distortion of objectivity" or a denial of the "seriousness or the usefulness of the enterprise." Nor does the absence of inherent meaning, as traditionalists have claimed, "plunge us into the abyss" (Scott, *ibid.*) or put the project of history in "mortal danger" (Jenkins, 1995, p. 25). Instead, these understandings simply help reconcile history with its own name and make visible that the production of meaning in history is always already human and thus mutable (Scott, 1996). Recognizing this human, creative—in a sense, fictive—element of history, White (1978) adds, does not mean history would be degraded

to the status of ideology or propaganda. In fact, this recognition would serve as a potent antidote to the tendency of historians to become captive of ideological preconceptions which they do not recognize as such but honor as the "correct" perception of "the way things *really* are." By drawing [history] nearer to its origins in literary sensibility, we should be able to identify the ideological, because it is the fictive, element in our own discourse. . . . So, too, if we recognize the literary or fictive element in every historical account, we would be able to move the teaching of

[history] onto a higher level of self-consciousness than it currently occupies. (p. 99)

According to White, it is not the study of more (of the same) history but rather the problematization of history as we have come to know it that will move the study of history to a higher level of reflexivity than it currently occupies. What are the implication of White's work and that of other critical theorists for what we do and can do in history classrooms? "What kind of thing might historical knowledge be," asks Seixas (1993b), "if it is not objective, knowable truth about a past which actually did exist?" (p. 241). And how, returning to Roth's (1995) question, should history education invite students to engage the world once the practice of history has been awoken from its "dogmatic slumbers"?

Implications for History Education

While for many of us learning history in school was based on the premise that "we should study history so the past will not repeat itself," it is not the repetitive past we ought to fear (for the past never repeats itself) but, rather, the legacy of the past in our present. For it is from a present that we construct pasts and upon which we create futures. The educational value in studying history is, thus, not only the study of the past itself, for "its own sake," but the understanding such a study might provide as to which particular pasts and ways of storying the past we have chosen to call our own, and how those choices have positioned us to act (or not act) in the world.

In *A Philosophy Of History In Fragments*, Heller (1993), claims that "men and women are thrown into a World, but only by having been thrown into History do they have a world" (p. 33). The question, therefore, is not whether one has a past but how one "gets thrown" into history to claim a world. Or, as Yerushalmi (1982, p. 99) puts it, what kind of past and whose past shall we have in order to do the "claiming"?

What kind of history, then, do we, as educators, wish to have our students "thrown in"? And what kind of "claiming" do we desire? Our choice, Jenkins (1991) reminds us, is between "a history that is aware of what it is doing and a history that is not" (p. 69). This choice demands distinguishing between two kinds of history we might engage in classrooms: a history that poses as objective, scientific, and true and one that is aware of its limitations and admits its contingency and partiality; a history which is about the past itself and one that is about how we make sense of that past from a present; a history that provides closure, and one that encourages the openness of possibilities. In short, the decision facing educators is between a history in

which students are receivers of information or one in which they are its producers; a history education that provides students with *what* to think or one that encourages them *to* think.

History encountered in schools today, however, is predominantly of the first kind, where many of the understandings derived from the "critical revolution" both inside and outside of history have not been reflected or undertaken (Green & Watson, 1993, p. 65). As such, it is still, more often than not, engaged as objective, neutral, and authorless—a disinterested site making unbiased choices and judgments about the past "as it was." History is still seen as a clear window to the past; its texts "for what they seem to represent or say rather than for what they do" (LaCapra, 1985, p. 38). Texts and the pedagogical environments in which they are engaged portray, according to Greene (1994), a "strong faith in the objectivity of history" (p. 92), where students "treat their assigned readings and textbooks, if not their teachers, as divinely inspired" (Berkhofer, 1988, p. 21). While students may often be asked to critically engage information in texts, they are rarely encouraged to explore the construction of those texts (Seixas, 1994, p. 108). Questioning is impeded since textbooks are often written "as if their authors did not exist at all," as if they were simply "transcribing official truths" (Schrag, 1967, p. 74. cf. Wineburg, 1991, p. 511). Providing little in the way of footnotes, explicit historiographic positioning, expression of methodological or epistemological doubt, or the possibility of alternative positions (Seixas, 1994, p. 108), textbooks convey a sense that "interpretation had anything to do with the words on the page" (Crismore, 1984, p. 295. cf. Wineburg, 1991, p. 512). Resulting, Wineburg (1991) illustrates, students see text(books) as "just reporting the facts . . . just saying what happened . . . [simply giving] straight information" (p. 501) and history itself as a closed story about the past rather than a social and discursive construct about the world (see also Salter, 1997, p. 19).

Presenting a closed sense of history, however, generates more than particular ways of seeing; it also, and equally, generates ways of not seeing and imagining. By engaging history as science, objective, and true, Hvolbek (1991) explains, we advance students estrangement from it. For by not questioning the obvious, by not challenging the taken-for-granted, students are left with the notion that the historical narrative is unnegotiable. And "when something is accepted as absolutely right and an end in itself, conversation is over" (pp. 5, 7). Such a practice, claims Scott (1996), "not only does violence to historical practice" by repressing the presence of agency and/as interpretation, "it also substitutes dogma for open-ended inquiry." And when reality is "offered as uncontestable truth," she adds, "we have reached the end of history."

As educators, however, we must see history as a beginning, never an end (epistemologically and pedagogically, that is, not in Fukuyama's [1992] sense of the "end of history" to which Scott was referring). We can no longer afford to consider history education, to borrow from Chambers (1996), simply a site in which truth is ratified and reified but, rather [as Said (1978) and Felman (1982) suggest], a "place in which knowledge is forced to face a worldly response, a historical response-ability" (p. 51). An example of such a response-ability, Willinsky (1998) offers, entails "a vigilance toward what has been lost and what has been brought forward as *history*" (p. 134), as well as a way of reconsidering "how the past remains present in the way we tend to see the world" (p. 244). For students, Willinsky adds, have the right to see what history has made of them and how it has rendered the world both sensible and possible, "even as this knowledge is bound to complicate and implicate their education" (p. 247).

The educative value one can develop in relation to history, as Roth (1995) suggests, is quite different if one starts from the conviction that we must give meaning to history rather than find a meaning and direction in it (p. 143). Indeed, teaching history in a manner that *is* aware of its construction, where students do not see history as "a fixed story" (Wineburg, 1991, p. 517), entails seeing texts and history-as-text as subjective constructions needing to be actively read; where students are made to consider that between the "facts" and the text(books) lie "analysis, interpretation, and narration . . . shaped by values, skills, questions, and understandings of a particular teller" (Holt, 1990, p. 17). This opens up new pedagogical opportunities for history education that force attention onto the text of history, not simply through it onto its content (Kellner, 1989, p. 4). Such a focus allows educators to use texts to ask different questions about knowledge, about our relationship to the past, present, and future, as well as "questions about the status of historical inquiry, and to realize that the relation of the historical text to reality is itself a historical problem" (Bann, 1990, p. 34. cf. Zammito, 1993, p. 805). What is engaged, therefore, is not only what a historical account says about the past but also, and simultaneously, how it comes to have meaning—its language and modes of construction, its codes and convention—and, consequently, how it positions readers to engage the past from a particular present.

Seeing history as a discursive construct invites teachers and students to question symbolic environments. It offers them opportunities to critically examine what tends to be perceived as natural and neutral in the production, circulation, and legitimation of a past into history and, more importantly perhaps, to ask: "Why?" Acknowledging that history is constructed not by (or for) itself but by some one for some (other) body opens it up to questions of its production: how is the "real" produced and maintained? Addressing discourse as means

of storying the past, allows those involved in the educative process to examine under what conditions and through what means one comes to know; how history is storied and how some stories become "legitimate" history(ies) while others are relegated to the periphery of history, history making, and history telling. How one stories the past, as much as who stories it and for what (and whose) purpose, therefore, becomes inseparable from the knowledge being produced and the opportunities this knowledge allows other—different—interpretations to be cultivated. Exploring these issues allow us to examine what Lather (1992) identifies as "the lack of innocence in any discourse by looking at the textual [and contextual] staging of knowledge" (p. 120). It encourages us to recognize, according to Knoblauch & Brannon (1993) the extent to which language articulates, objectifies and rationalizes social reality, as well as "the extent to which those with the political power to 'name the world' come to dominate its meaning" (p. 23).

From such a vantage point, Rosenstone (1995) suggests, new and different questions could be asked about what history and its education currently are and are not as well as what they can and cannot be; about why we learn about the past; about how we use that knowledge and how we have been used by it. Such a focus, however, requires educators to pose different questions in history classrooms. Primarily, it requires a shift from questions which pertain to "What is true?" to those which examine "What is truth, for whom, and why?" Rather than only asking students whether a historical text accurately reflects the past, we ought to be asking: according to what conventional and methodological practices, whose discourse, whose standards, whose past? As we problematize a multiplicity of historical textualizations and make judgments about them and the world, we ought to ask: why and how do different media, different texts, different genres produce different truths about a common past? Why do different audiences believe different truths? What makes some media, some narratives, some conventions more convincing in their storying of the past? A reading which questions the authority and conventions of different interpretive communities to tell the past engages ways of challenging the dominance of particular histories and textualizations (what counts as history, what does not?), particular voices, particular pasts over other. It is a reading that, in Wineburg's (1991) words, sees texts "not as ways to describe the world" (p. 449) but as instruments masterfully crafted to achieve social/political ends (p. 502).

While such a pedagogical approach emphasizes the need to provide students with tools to critically read and re-write historical texts, it does not necessarily mean that learning the (events of the) past is insignificant. Indeed, a critical approach to history education does not

entail, as Zammito (1993) implies, “ceasing to ‘do’ history and restricting oneself to thinking about [its constructedness]” (p. 806). Rather, the juxtaposition of those two terms—“doing” history and “thinking” about that doing—as separate methodologies becomes problematic. For as White (1978) points out, the distinction between “proper” history and metahistory obscures more than it illuminates. “There can be no proper history,” claims White, “without the presupposition of a full-blown metahistory” by which to justify a historical representation (p. 52). Further, the distinction between proper history and historiography whereby history is the study of the past and historiography is the study of historians’ interpretations of the past, is also untenable according to White. For historians can only know the past through textualizations and can write about that past in form of text alone. In other words, historians read texts in order to write new ones. Consequently, history education does not engage the real past but interpretations of the past in form of texts—be it a textbook, an article, an artifact, a primary or secondary document, a poem, a poster, a video, and so on. In other words, the school discipline in which we encounter a narration of the past, according to Jenkins (1991, p. 34; 1995, p. 16), may be better considered historiography rather than history. Alvarado and Ferguson (1983) explain:

We would suggest that not only is it historiography that we should be teaching in schools rather than history *but* that historiography is what *is* being taught ... That is, one should reveal that it is not the “real world” that is being taught about in history lessons but rather a discourse (or, if you are lucky, discourses) about the world—a *representation* of that world that is “historical”—that which belongs to discourses which can be institutionally specified and analysed (p. 25)

Exploring history as historiography and questioning the authority of historians, of the historical method, and of historical texts helps to make both visible and problematic the presuppositions of discourses, values, and methodologies that legitimate and enforce particular arrangements constituting history education and its relation, through power and convention, to knowledge. Engaging the inevitability and partiality of inscription and how language, author(ity), and agency become factors of truth, we begin to see how history constructs and conditions knowledge—any knowledge, regardless of perspective or worldview. Once the authority of realism is broken down, explains Roth (1995), there is a clearing which “allows us to think again about the enormous range of choices there are in establishing our connection to our past and thus in developing a stance in the present” (pp.

144–145). This encourages, Southgate (1996) points out, “an awareness of historical contingency” where it becomes evident that history could have been and could be other than what it is (p. 54). Engaging the history curriculum in such a manner illustrates to students that there is choice in history. And choice, according to Davidson (1986, cf. Berkhofer, 1995, p. 8), implies that history “is not simply inherited but constructed, and constructed according to the...categories we devise” (pp. 255–256).

Conclusion

Behind the facade of objectivity, truth, realism, and immediate correspondence one currently finds in many history classrooms lies a whole world of creativity, construction, invention, and selection. History—a process of inscription rather than description—the emerging literature in critical history has shown us, is active, not passive. Hence, its study requires contestation, deconstruction, and action, not passivity, blind acceptance, and retention. The purpose of studying history, then, is not “the reduction of the unknown to the known, but the estrangement of what seems so familiar” (Ankersmit, 1994, p. 42), already well-known, recognized, comprehensible, coherent, and “readable.” It is not, adds Giroux (1996), “about constructing a linear narrative but about blasting history open, rupturing its silences, highlighting its detours, and organizing its limits” and possibilities (p. 51).

To arrive at that, history/social studies educators must create a pedagogical environment in which the very foundations of history, as a discipline, are called into question; a space in which history, to borrow from Chambers (1996, p. 50), is shaken—it’s habitual meanings and ways of making meaning are exposed as custom and the prescribed is unsettled by a shift into the elsewhere of the possible. How we engage history in classrooms determines the kind of questions students can (and hopefully will) ask of history, of society, of their own education, of themselves. While history, as a discipline, might look back, to the past, to construct its texts, its stories, its narratives, its discourse, the kinds of questions it asks (and does not ask) are all embedded in the political, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual milieu of its present. To study history is thus to address both elements of the historical enterprise as well as to ask how those elements play out in the educational endeavour in which history is engaged. If we care “how the past means” (Rosenstone, 1995, p. 10), what we need are epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical structures that will make the construction of the past as important as, and an inherent part of, the very past which has supposedly given rise to meaning in the first place. To activate such structures, teachers and students must first

imagine a history education which no longer simply explores the past for what it was but one which begins to see history for what it is, for how it could be otherwise.

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Teaching Social Studies in Caribbean Schools: Perceived Problems of Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract

The concerns of social studies teachers in the islands of the English-speaking Caribbean represent an under-researched area. This study investigated the perceived problems in teaching elementary school social studies in the Eastern Caribbean. A distinctive group of teachers, who have had some years of teaching experiences prior to their formal teacher education, respondents in this study perceived three major problems in teaching social studies: a lack of adequate resources; administrative support; a limited range of pedagogical strategies. These issues and other significant problems facing Caribbean teachers are discussed.

Introduction

Much research has been conducted internationally into the problems encountered and perceived by teachers (e.g., Fuller, 1969; Keavney & Sinclair, 1978; Veenman, 1984; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Reynolds, 1992; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). Some of these researchers have identified major problems, such as: classroom discipline, motivating students, assessing pupils' work, interactions with parents, and subject matter knowledge. While Fuller (1969), in focusing on the concerns of teachers, identifies a developmental hierarchy of concerns spanning (a) perception of their adequacy as a teacher, (b) the task of teaching, and (c) the impact of their teaching. This interest in the problems of teaching represents a recognition of the critical nature of these factors and their implications for teaching and the classroom performance of teachers (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). A study of this nature can therefore provide useful insights into the problems as perceived by teachers in their own cultural and school/classroom context.

With respect to the English-speaking Caribbean region, the area of perceived classroom problems in teaching is a largely under-researched area. A study by Richardson (1987) used a sample of 332

"student teachers" enrolled in inservice teacher education programs for elementary school teachers in the Eastern Caribbean. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire based on the pre-existing list of twenty-four problems identified by Veenman (1984) in his comprehensive review of the literature on perceived classroom problems. The study found that Caribbean teachers in-training, in general, are primarily concerned with problems of resource materials and equipment, class size, free time, and teaching "slow" learners. Caribbean teachers in-training thus emerged as being more concerned with the task of teaching, than one might expect according to Fuller's (1969) developmental hierarchy of teacher concerns. Richardson's findings, however, need to be interpreted against the background of an important consideration. The instrument used in his study was a structured questionnaire developed in what is an essentially different cultural context and based on a different, more extensive research base. One cannot conclude, from this study alone, that these problems are in fact the major ones perceived by Caribbean teachers.

Apart from Richardson (1987), there is very little research conducted on problems of teaching as perceived by teachers in Caribbean classrooms; and this lack of research is even more apparent with respect to the teaching of social studies and the realities of social studies classrooms in the Caribbean (Griffith, 1995). The present study differs from the Richardson (1987) study in two major respects. Firstly, it employs an open-form questionnaire format rather than using a structured, *a priori* design; and, secondly, it focuses specifically on the perceived problems in teaching social studies.

Current thinking and research in social studies, also, highlights teacher activities, classroom behaviors, and teacher concerns as critical areas in the effective teaching of social studies and as areas that are in need of further research and investigation (Banks & Parker, 1990; Contreras, 1990; Zevin, 1990). The focus here on social studies also recognizes the ongoing concern and interest in content-specific pedagogy. Reynolds (1992) notes, content-specific pedagogy is central to teacher understandings and contextualizes other domains of understanding. Teacher conceptions of content-specific pedagogy guide the classroom behavior and decisions of teachers as they mediate content (Porter & Brophy, 1987; Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992). Thus, it is important for teacher educators to have clear insights and understandings into the specific concerns and perceptions of social studies teachers, if they are to enhance the authentic and effective teaching of the subject.

Purpose of the Study

Based on the two aforementioned conceptual underpinnings, this study focuses on the teaching of social studies in the islands of the

Eastern Caribbean. The study attempts to provide some important insights into (a) what elementary school teachers in the islands of the Eastern Caribbean perceive to be the major problems in teaching social studies, and (b) how do these teachers understand and articulate the nature of these problems. Another goal of this study is to offer some useful insights into the classroom and cultural contexts of Caribbean schools, as well as providing some understanding of the factors that influence instructional decisions and practices. This study, which examines a sample of a unique teacher population, which has several years of teaching experience *prior to* undergoing formal training, may provide insights to discussions of alternative routes to teacher certification.

The East Caribbean Context

There are seventeen English-speaking Caribbean countries which, in addition to a common language, share a history, culture, and developmental concerns, since they were all, until the 1960s, part of the British Empire. Today, twelve are independent states; five are British dependencies.¹ Ten of the islands, stretching from the Virgin Islands south to Grenada, are classified as the Eastern Caribbean; and are served by the Barbados (Cave Hill) campus of the University of the West Indies. Each of the individual territories is a separate political unit, exercising local control over its own educational system. The Ministry (Department) of Education in each territory has responsibility for creating a curriculum appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the country and its population (Morrissey 1991).

As colonies, the English-speaking islands of the Eastern Caribbean inherited the British system of education, with its emphasis on knowledge and scholarship rather than on preparation for social life. A separate subject approach is taken to citizenship education, rather than an integrated social studies (Lister, 1991). Like their African counterparts, these territories have largely maintained the British system, with some modifications to more closely reflect local realities since independence (Merryfield & Muyanda-Mutebi, 1991). Social studies was introduced into the Caribbean school curriculum in the 1960's, informed by the conceptual underpinnings of North American social studies and the "new social studies." Although social studies is generally taught in all primary schools in the region, it remains optional to history and/or geography at the secondary school level. As a new subject, social studies in the Caribbean is still experiencing a number of growing pains as efforts are made to replace traditional content and approaches to teaching. Morrissey (1991) identifies the major concerns of Caribbean social studies as: curriculum planning, teacher education, instructional materials, and innovative leadership in the field.

There are eight teachers' colleges providing training for elementary school teachers in the Eastern Caribbean. Additionally, two territories (Anguilla and Montserrat) have a non-institutional, inservice program in which teachers are released from classes one day per week to attend training sessions. Two of the colleges, in Barbados and in St. Lucia, have been recently upgraded to offer degree-level qualifications for teachers. The two-year training program at the colleges are jointly developed with and approved by the University of the West Indies.

The current program offers courses in both content and methodology in four core subject-areas for all teachers: mathematics, language arts (English), science and social studies. In addition to these core requirements, there are also required courses in educational theory and foundations, and in basic research methods in education. Candidates also take a number of optional or elective courses in areas such as health and family-life education, physical education, agriculture, or technical and vocational studies. For social studies, the content component covers such topics as: society and social groups, government and institutions, physical and human resources, industry and technology, tourism, and transportation and communication. Social studies methods courses address: the nature of social studies, curriculum goals and objectives, planning for teaching, teaching strategies and activities, and student assessment. Candidates attend three hours of classes in social studies per week over the course of the program.

All trainees are assessed on a practicum in teaching that covers a total of twelve weeks and is divided into two three-week periods during each of the two years of the program. All of the core courses in the program, with the exception of the practicum, are assessed through a number of written assignments and examinations, and are evaluated by the University of the West Indies which is, in effect, the accreditation body for teachers in the Caribbean.

Elementary teachers provide instruction in all subjects in the school program, including social studies. Although each territory has its own social studies syllabus, these syllabi share a common ancestry through the Primary Education Project (PEP). The PEP was funded by the United States Agency for International development (USAID), in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, to develop a core curriculum guide, for the Eastern Caribbean in the areas of language arts, science, mathematics and social studies. The social studies curriculum is based on an expanding horizons pattern, and covers the "Home and the Family" in the lower grades (ages 5-7), the "Local Community and Our Country" in the middle grades (ages 7-9), and the "Caribbean Community and the Wider World" in the upper grades (ages 9-11). Five basic themes spiral through the curriculum: (a) settlement, (b) the physical and human environment, (c) industry, work

and occupations, (d) government and leaders, and (e) customs and cultural practices. In the upper grades, the theme of "interdependence of world peoples" is introduced. As a result, the curriculum reflects six of the ten thematic strands in the social studies curriculum standards (NCSS, 1994).

The Population and Sample

The teachers in elementary schools (for ages 5-11) in the Eastern Caribbean territories are, for the most part, recruited directly out of high school, or out of the equivalent of junior college. Most elementary teachers have not yet completed a four year college degree program, nor have they received any formal teacher education. According to Griffith (1995), practicing elementary teachers in the Eastern Caribbean fall into one of three categories: (a) untrained teachers who have not yet received any formal professional education, other than through short induction courses or occasional workshops (about 45% of the teachers in Eastern Caribbean schools fall into this category); (b) teachers currently in training in a two-year college program (currently comprising about 12% of teachers); and (c) teachers who have completed a formal two-year, inservice program at a teachers' college (about 43% of teachers). The inadequacy of training facilities and a high demand for training of inservice teachers has mitigated against the development of a system of preservice education. The demand for inservice educational opportunities is further exacerbated by a high attrition rate among young teachers who have completed a two-year college program and are attracted to better salaries in other jobs and to opportunities abroad.

When the teachers eventually begin formal inservice education program at the teachers' colleges, they typically have three to eight years of teaching experience (Richardson, 1987). In the educational and cultural context of the Caribbean, therefore, beginning teachers are normally both untrained and non-graduate; and as such, quite dissimilar and not readily comparable to beginning teachers in North America and Europe—the population of most previous studies of perceived problems in teaching (e.g., Veenman, 1984). Similarly, teachers enrolled in initial teacher education programs in the Caribbean do not fit the mold of preservice teachers as the term is normally used in the literature (e.g., Kagan, 1992). As a result, inservice elementary teachers in the English-speaking Caribbean are neither "preservice" teachers nor "beginning" teachers in the North American usage of the terms.

A sample of elementary teachers, at the end of the two-year inservice teacher college program, was randomly selected for this study of perceived problems in teaching social studies. The sample, consisting of 293 teachers (79 males and 214 females), represents two-thirds

of the teachers (in total and by gender) who, over a two-year period (1990 and 1991), graduated from the six teachers' colleges in the islands of Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. Although these teachers were enrolled in their first formal teacher-training program, they have all had, as noted earlier, several years of classroom experience.

Methodology

Using an open-form or unstructured questionnaire, all of the teachers in the sample were asked to identify and list what they perceived as (a) the five major problems in teaching social studies in their school; and (b) to briefly describe the nature of each of these problems. This type of questionnaire provides for greater depth of detail, and, according to Best and Kahn (1993), permits respondents to not only reveal their frame of reference, but also to elaborate reasons for their responses. Given the limited research base in this area of Caribbean education and the peculiar academic and professional characteristics of the teacher population, an open-form questionnaire was seen as a way of avoiding the pitfalls of using *a priori* designs and instruments developed in different cultural contexts (Contreras, 1990; Torney-Purta, 1991). The responses, then, represent the views of this sample of elementary teachers with respect to what they themselves perceive to be the major problems in the teaching of social studies in elementary schools in the Eastern Caribbean.

The instrument was pilot tested with a small sample of first-year teachers from the college population. This pilot test indicated a high degree of similarity in the problems listed by respondents, and a number of identifiable problem areas emerged from the responses on the pre-test. These included: (a) resource materials, (b) teacher attitude, (c) student attitude, (d) teaching skills, (e) administrative support from school principals, (f) classroom space, (g) the use of field-trips and out-of-class activities, (h) the actual number of trained teachers, and (i) the social studies curriculum itself.

While all of these problem areas were specifically identified by name, on occasion, some respondents identified aspects or indicators of the problem, rather than listing the problem itself. For example, the absence of (wall) maps of the Caribbean, or of books or reading materials was, in some instances, listed as the problem. Each of these, however, is clearly an indicator of the bigger problem of resource materials; and they were therefore classified and coded as such. Similarly, reference to teachers "not liking the subject" or "not making any effort to make it interesting" were classified as indicators of the problem of teacher attitude to the subject. The problem of teaching skills was isolated and identified through such responses as: "the overuse

of the lecture method," or "teachers not using innovative ways of teaching," or "teachers not using a variety of teaching strategies." In terms of the lack of administrative support, some pilot study respondents cited such concerns as: "head-teachers (principals) not giving social studies adequate time on the time-table," or "some head-teachers not seeing social studies as being as important as English and Mathematics." A total of nine specific problem areas emerged in the pilot study, and no additional ones were raised by respondents on the actual questionnaire instrument.

When they were asked to expand on the nature of the problems, respondents elaborated on their perception of different aspects or indicators of the problem, and also gave examples. These descriptive statements provide for a fuller and better understanding of the dimensions of the problem and allowed the researcher to explore some of the implications of these. In dealing with the qualitative data generated on the nature of the problems, aspects of the individual problems offered by respondents, as well as explanations given, were indexed and annotated (Berg, 1989) by territory and by gender. Counts were made of the frequency with which the different aspects and indicators were noted by respondents; and an attempt was made to capture and summarize the essential points of the various comments and explanations. Some examples of typical comments and descriptive insights made by respondents in the sample are quoted in the text.

Based on the results of the pilot, code forms were devised for transcribing the data from the questionnaires according to problems, indicators and comments/explanations. The data was transcribed and coded independently by two readers; and any differences which arose were discussed and a consensus agreement was developed. The responses per problem were tallied and summarized by territory and by gender, and the problems were ranked on the basis of how frequently they were identified by respondents in the sample. Because of the substantial differences in the actual numbers of male and female teachers in the sample, the numerical frequencies, per problem, were converted into a percentage of the population of each of the sub-samples. This indicated what percentage of the sub-samples listed each problem (see Table 1); and the rankings were based on these mean percentages. Spearman's correlation coefficient was computed to summarize the relationships between the rankings by the sub-populations of gender and territory; and the t-test was applied to test for differences in the mean percentage ratings between the sub-populations.

Findings and Analysis

Respondents identified nine problems that they perceive to be the major ones faced in the teaching of social studies. Problems most often mentioned were: (a) a lack of adequate and appropriate resource materials, (b) invariability in teaching strategies; (c) lack of administrative support; (d) negative attitudes of both teachers and students towards social studies as a school subject. Other perceived problems, in descending rank order, are: an inadequate numbers of trained teachers, infrequent field trips, a problematic social studies curriculum, and inadequate classroom space.

Table 1 lists the problems identified by respondents, and their weighted ratings. A very high proportion of the sample (93%) noted the lack of resource materials as a problem; while lack of variety in the use of teaching skills was identified by two-thirds of the teachers (66%). No other aspect of the teaching of social studies was rated as a problem by more than a third of the sample—the next most highly rated being lack of administrative support (29%). Negative attitudes towards social studies by both teachers (28%) and students (25%) were the next most frequently mentioned problems; and these were followed by the number of trained teachers (19%), field-trips (17%), the social studies curriculum itself (16%), and classroom space (15%). This pattern was consistent for both male and female teachers, and also generally held across territories.

TABLE 1
**Overall Rating and Rank Order of Caribbean Elementary Teachers'
Perceived Problems in Teaching Social Studies**

Problem	Rank	Percent of Respondents Identifying Problem
Resource materials	1	93%
Teaching strategies/skills	2	66%
Administrative support	3	29%
Teacher attitude	4	28%
Student attitude	5	25%
Supply of trained teachers	6	19%
Field trips	7	17%
Social studies curriculum	8	16%
Available classroom space	9	15%

With respect to rank order (Table 1), the lack of adequate resources is clearly perceived as the most problematic area faced by teachers in the teaching of social studies in Eastern Caribbean primary schools.

This problem was also clearly viewed as such by both male and female teachers in all of the territories surveyed—with the sole exception of female teachers in one territory who ranked it second. The limited range of teaching strategies/skills used by teachers in social studies was the second most highly ranked problem—a ranking that was also consistent across territories, with both male and female teachers. A perceived lack of administrative support, identified as the third major problem facing the teaching of social studies in east Caribbean schools, is a perception shared equally by both male and female teachers in general. Although there is some variation in ranking among territories and by gender, statistical analyses indicated no significant differences between the mean ratings of the problems by male and female teachers, or by territories.

The research literature indicates that a majority of the nine aspects of teaching social studies perceived as problematic by this sample of Caribbean elementary teachers are important variables in effective social studies teaching. This suggests that, in spite of different cultural and professional contexts, Caribbean social studies teachers seem to have similar perceptions about the teaching of social studies as their counterparts elsewhere, and that the areas they perceive as important and problematic are not unique to the Caribbean.

The Nature of the Problems

Although substantial research has been conducted internationally on identifying the problems faced by classroom teachers, little appears in the literature on the specific nature of these problems—and certainly not with respect to the Caribbean. Given that the nature of any teaching/learning problem is shaped, to some extent, by the context of the educational and schooling system, it is worthwhile to examine the specific nature of the problems in teaching of social studies as they are perceived by Caribbean elementary teachers.

Resource Materials. The lack of adequate and appropriate resources is clearly perceived as the most critical problem in the teaching of the subject. For these Caribbean teachers, the major aspects of the problem are related to the lack of such resources as (a) books and reading materials (31%), (b) maps and globes (30%), and (c) audio-visual and graphic materials, and artifacts (26%). These were the most frequently mentioned indicators of resource deficiency across all territories, indicating a high level of consistency and agreement. The following comments illustrate teachers' perceptions of the nature and implications of the problem.

"Lessons on concepts such as directions, location, etc. cannot be effective without globes and large-scale maps for students to manipulate."

"The social studies syllabus covers areas which call for many activities, but because materials are not available, then very few social studies activities are actually done."

"The lack of resources hampers the use of some techniques such as small-group activities, and some skills are not properly taught."

"Due to inadequate resource materials and the difficulty of access to them when needed, students are deprived of opportunities to manipulate concrete materials or objects as a means of understanding the abstract."

These deficiencies reflect both the limited resources traditionally allocated by ministries of education for the purchase of classroom resources, and, equally, a tradition of reliance on teacher-transmitted information. This scarcity is even more acute with respect to social studies, a relatively recent addition to the school curriculum, in comparison with other subjects (Morris, Morrissey, & King, 1991). Limited expenditures on resource materials likely explains the limited use of teaching resources observed by Griffith (1995). The teachers' call for adequate supplies of relevant resource materials indicates an interest in moving away from teacher talk as the primary mode of instruction in social studies. Previous research (e.g., Goodlad, 1984; Olsen, 1995; Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985) clearly identifies an adequate supply of appropriate and varied resource materials as essential for the effective social studies teaching and, therefore, it is important for the respective Caribbean governments, through their ministries of education, to significantly increase their expenditure on appropriate teaching supplies and resources.

Teaching Skills. The second major area of concern identified by respondents was teaching strategies/skills. When asked to elaborate on the nature of the problem respondents identified the five major indicators of the problem as: (a) an unwillingness, by their colleagues, to utilize different strategies and techniques (25%), (b) paying inadequate attention to innovative ways of teaching (9%), (c) lacking the ability to motivate their students (8%), (d) unwilling or unable to use investigative activities (8%), and (e) over-use of lecturing (8%). A similar finding was noted by Griffith (1995) who observed that Caribbean teachers appear to use a very limited range of teaching techniques, focusing mainly on routine questioning and on lectures. These practices tended to persist even after their training.

Numerous illustrations of this problem were provided by respondents, representative samples include:

"Many teachers lack the skill and expertise in imparting knowledge in a meaningful way to pupils."

"Many teachers just prefer telling students the answers and giving them the information rather than engaging them in active learning."

"Teachers provide limited opportunities for students to practice and apply the skills and concepts taught."

"Too many teachers slavishly follow topic after topic as they come in the curriculum, without attempting to connect related topics or to be innovative in modifying topics to suit the particular class."

It is, of course, important that social studies be taught by skilled and competent teachers, who employ a varied repertoire of teaching strategies and who know the subject matter (e.g., Goodlad, 1984; Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985; Brophy & Alleman, 1993; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994; Olsen, 1995). Most student complaints about social studies are related to factors such as: routinized teaching methods, emphasis on facts and trivial details, lack of opportunities for active learning, and a lack of stimulating and challenging lessons (e.g., Schug, 1984; Weible & Evans, 1984). Academic and instructional competence are integral aspects of good teaching and it is the teacher who is seen as the curricular gate-keeper and the key to what social studies will be for the student (Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985; Thornton, 1994).

While it is significant that the unwillingness of teachers to vary their teaching techniques is identified, by the teachers, as the single most highly ranked indicator of this problem, the inadequate supply of resources, noted earlier, can also be viewed as a potential constraint on the selection and use of teaching techniques. Without an adequate supply and variety of relevant instructional resources, teachers, no matter how well trained and competent, are greatly restricted in their selection and use of instructional techniques. Given the current teacher education program's emphasis on content knowledge and written assignments, the lack of variety in teaching practices may well be, in part, a function of their training (Griffith, 1995). The level of administrative support and the curriculum content coverage required by the school syllabus are most likely constraining factors on the use of a variety of teaching techniques.

Administrative support. The problem of the perceived lack of administrative support was identified by the sample of Caribbean elementary teachers in terms of three issues: (a) an inadequate number and length of periods being allotted to social studies on the time-table (75%), (b) the scheduled placing of social studies on the time-table—particularly in the late afternoon(23%), and (c) the inadequate resources allocated to the subject at the school (20%). Taken together, these issues suggest that the school administration views social studies as a low priority, particularly in contrast to mathematics and language arts. In the words of a sample of teachers,

“Social studies is only taught twice per week and always in the afternoons. These classes are regularly disrupted for extra-curricular activities.”

“At my school, there is only one period (of 30 mins.) per week given to social studies, and there is therefore a rush to cover the topics.”

“The limited time given to social studies on the time-table reinforces in children the perception that this subject is not very relevant or important.”

Yon & Passe (1994) stress the important role played by the principal's leadership and support in enhancing the performance of young social studies teachers. This support includes active encouragement for teacher initiative, effort and enthusiasm, as well as accommodation with respect to trying out new teaching techniques and approaches. Advocacy from the principal also extends to ensuring the provision of appropriate and adequate resources, and flexibility in the time-table in order to accommodate social studies activities, including out-of-class activities such as field trips. The willingness of teachers to try out new teaching techniques and to use a variety of methods is thus influenced, in part, by the extent of the principal's support and leadership.

While there is clearly a need for school principals to be more sensitive to the needs and perceptions of their teachers, their own actions and decisions are influenced by various factors, including limited school funds and the combination of official policy towards, and public perception of, the status of social studies in the school curriculum. The relatively recent introduction of the subject into the Caribbean school curriculum, together with the traditional preference for the separate-subject approach to history and geography, would explain why social studies is not yet granted the same status as mathematics, science, and language arts. Yet, in order to acquire this status,

the subject and the teachers need to be adequately supported by both education officials and school administrators.

Teacher attitude. Teacher and students attitudes toward social studies have been well researched (e.g., Adler, 1984; Weible & Evans, 1984; Shaughnessy and Haladyna, 1985; McGowan, Sutton, & Smith, 1990); and it has been shown to be a critical variable in both the teaching and the learning of social studies. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, and their efforts to make it interesting, alive and exciting can be communicated to the students as readily as can any dislike or negative perceptions. Teacher attitude is, therefore, very likely to impact significantly on the attitude of the students towards the subject. Caribbean elementary teachers in this study perceived the attitude of their colleagues toward social studies as a significant problem in teaching of the subject. Among the attitude variables identified as problematic by these teachers were: lack of interest or enthusiasm for the subject (58%), an unwillingness to try different techniques and activities (14%), inadequate time and effort devoted to planning for teaching (9%), and a negative perception of social studies' importance (9%). Clearly, however, the first variable given above may be viewed as being reinforced through the others. The following comments provide additional insights into the perceptions of the respondents.

"Some teachers are very complacent and lazy about social studies. They are not innovative and therefore teach year after year using the same method."

"Some teachers do not like the subject themselves, and this is communicated to the students."

"The subject is not seen by some teachers as a major subject which warrants much effort."

"Some teachers do not see social studies as important in the child's education."

These comments indicate a negative attitude toward social studies by many teachers—reinforcing the attitude held by some principals. It is likely that many teachers would not have studied social studies in their secondary school program, having opted for the separate subjects of history and/or geography. They are therefore likely to view social studies as having less academic value than the longer established subjects and, perhaps as a simplified subject for less able students. Teacher background, beliefs, and preparation all influence teachers' perspectives. While teachers' backgrounds cannot be changed, there is considerable potential for modifying their beliefs and percep-

tions of the subject during their professional development (Ross 1994; Ross, Cornett, and McCutcheon, 1992; Wilson, Konopak & Readance, 1994).

Student attitude. Teachers who identified the low regard of students for social studies as a major problem saw this as being primarily exhibited through: a lack of interest in the subject (48%), statements and/or display of boredom with classes (23%), and a perception of the subject as being irrelevant (6%). This rating of the aspects of the problem was also consistent across all territories—with lack of interest being most frequently cited. The following sample of comments reflects the perceptions of teachers on this issue.

"To some students, social studies is not seen as relevant to their life and experiences."

"Many students find the social studies classes boring and uninteresting, and are not motivated to participate in class."

"Some students are always trying to skip or avoid social studies classes."

Few aspects of social studies have been studied more than student attitude toward the subject and the evidence indicates a rather negative perception (Schug, Todd, & Beery, 1984; Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985; McGowan, Sutton, & Smith, 1990). This negative attitude is expressed through students' statements that the subject is boring, irrelevant, uninteresting, and repetitive. The major factors influencing student attitudes have been identified as: (a) teacher variables such as, enthusiasm, instructional competence and commitment; and (b) learning environment variables, such as resource materials, goal direction and the learning experiences provided (Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985). The perceptions of student attitude noted in this study are those of the teachers, and not of the students themselves.

Interestingly, Caribbean students, when questioned directly, do not appear to have a negative attitude towards social studies. Research done on Caribbean students (Higgins, 1977; Pascale, 1984; Alexander, 1996) reveals that students appear to have a generally positive attitude toward social studies in comparison with the other core subjects (e.g., mathematics, science and language arts). Thus, there is some contradiction between the perceptions of teachers in this survey and previous reports of students' attitudes toward social studies. The existing attitude toward social studies among Caribbean elementary teachers, as well as their instructional practices and the lack of adequate resource materials, represent the critical factors influencing stu-

dent attitude toward the subject. It is important for both teachers and school administrators in the Eastern Caribbean to address students' attitudes towards social studies, particularly since, as the evidence suggests, attitude to the subject impacts significantly on performance.

Supply of trained teachers. Teachers in the sample have commented, by way of further elaboration on this issue, that

"Too many young, untrained teachers are assigned to teach social studies."

"Teachers who have no training in social studies are required to teach it, but they are not effective on the job, and do not motivate students into liking the subject."

"Untrained teachers, because they are not aware of the manner in which children learn social studies, will be causing harm to students..."

The actual number of trained teachers does not appear in the literature as either an area investigated or as an issue of concern. But respondents in the sample have identified it as a separate and major issue in the teaching of social studies. This factor is also obviously linked to the question of instructional skills and competence. In the context of the Eastern Caribbean where a large percentage of classroom teachers are in fact untrained, it is not unexpected that this emerges as an area of concern among teachers. As noted earlier, only about 55% of the elementary teachers in East Caribbean schools have completed or are enrolled in a teacher education program. The large percentage of untrained teachers, many of whom may not have even taken a course in social studies in high school themselves, is legitimate cause for concern. Solving this particular problem is the major responsibility of the governments which must put measures in place and to provide the funding and the opportunities for such teacher education in order to expand the corps of trained teachers available in the system.

Field-trips and out-of-class activities. Caribbean teachers do not rank the infrequent use of field-trips as one of their major problems. This could indicate either that the number and frequency of field-trips are seen as quite adequate, or that, while viewing them as being inadequate, the teachers nevertheless do not perceive the limited number and frequency to be a major problem in the context of their teaching. The latter conclusion would appear to reflect, as highlighted by Griffith (1995), an under-utilization of opportunities for out-of-class activities. It should be noted however that, in some of the territories, there are specific restrictions by the Ministry of Education on the use of field-

trips. Despite the fact that they themselves use field-trips infrequently, Caribbean teachers nevertheless seem to be quite aware of the need and benefits of such activities, as the following comments by respondents would indicate.

"Students are unable to see or visit actual examples to illustrate a topic or concept."

"Teachers are not taking students outside of the classroom, or providing them with first-hand, practical experiences."

"There is a failure...to fully exploit the local environment in the communication of social studies content."

Field-trips and out-of-class activities have been identified as being critical to good and effective social studies teaching (Goodlad, 1984; Schug, Todd, & Beery, 1984; Alleman & Brophy, 1994; Olsen, 1995). This is particularly so where these activities are meaningful and worthwhile to the extent that they engage students in using the community as a living laboratory for social studies learning, in collecting data on relevant social issues and in applying the concepts learned in class to real life situations (Alleman & Brophy 1994). Educational administrators thus need to be sensitive to the contribution of out-of-class activities to student learning and to the development of civic competence, and to put mechanisms in place to facilitate these activities.

The social studies curriculum. Caribbean elementary teachers' concerns about the social studies curriculum seem to revolve around both instructional procedures, as indicated earlier, and content. The shortcomings, are rooted mainly in (a) topics that are unsuitable for some grades (29%), (b) topics that are irrelevant to everyday life (18%), (c) a curriculum that is too content-oriented (7%), and (d) lack of activities included in the curriculum (7%). Outdated content and a shortage of copies of the existing curriculum document were also cited as problematic. Some typical comments were:

"The existing curriculum is not suitable in content for the junior grades."

"There is not much relationship or relevance of some topics and methods to living in the society."

"Students are unable to relate what is learned in the curriculum to their environment and background experiences."

Few studies have actually identified the social studies curriculum itself as being problematic; and although some (e.g., Schug, Todd, & Beery, 1984) have concluded that one of students' complaints relates to the subject matter in the curriculum, this dissatisfaction lies more with the volume of content (Olsen, 1995) and how this subject-matter is taught and transacted in the classroom, than with the nature and quality of the content (Weible & Evans, 1984). As noted earlier, each of the Caribbean territories has developed its own social studies curriculum. As a result, there is no common social studies curriculum across territories or grades. Although these are all generally based on the UWI/USAID Primary Education Project, they nonetheless represent a high level of curriculum fragmentation. For the Caribbean, therefore, the absence of a clearly defined and approved curriculum in social studies, for each grade level in all territories, is a major area of concern that needs to be addressed.

Classroom space. The question of classroom space also does not appear in the literature as a problem of note, or as a major variable in the teaching of social studies; but class size is frequently mentioned (e.g., Veenman, 1984). Although there is a clear and obvious relationship between the two factors, the teachers in the sample specifically mentioned classroom space as being problematic. In spite of the rather large classes in many Eastern Caribbean schools—up to as many as forty students or more in some cases—one may conclude that Caribbean elementary teachers perceive limited classroom space to be a far more significant problem for them than actual class size. Classroom space was, however, indicated as being inadequate mainly for grouping and group activities (67%), and for the display of materials and students' work (33%). As some teachers observed,

"Because of the size of the room and the lack of space, some important social studies skills are difficult to teach."

"There is insufficient space for effectively arranging students to work in groups."

Given a history of large classes, it may be that most teachers have accepted this as the norm, and thus do not perceive this as a problem. Without ignoring the issue of class size, the challenge to education officials in the Eastern Caribbean would seem to be more the provision of adequate classroom space.

Conclusion

The problems identified here as facing the teaching of social studies in Caribbean schools represent the perceptions of Caribbean

inservice teachers themselves, a random sample of Caribbean teachers who, though in the final stage of completing their first period of teacher education, have already had several years of classroom experience. These perceptions are therefore informed by both of these important realities.

These teachers identify inadequate resource materials and a lack of variety in the use of teaching methods as, by far, the major problems in teaching social studies. Concerns about the level of administrative support received by classroom teachers, and what is perceived as the negative attitudes of both teachers and students toward social studies are also seen as major problems. An inadequate supply of trained teachers, infrequent use of field-trips, the social studies curriculum syllabus, and inadequate classroom space are the other major problems listed. The teachers have also, quite perceptively, indicated the nature of the problems and their impact on both the teaching and the learning of social studies.

It is the major responsibility of both education officials and school administrators to note and address the concerns of teachers and to provide the requisite financial and administrative supports and leadership in order to enhance the quality of the learning environment. These officials and their respective agencies clearly have major responsibility for the provision of adequate resource materials, classroom space, the curriculum framework, facilities and access to training, and other educational inputs. And urgent steps need to be taken on these matters. Caribbean governments and Ministries of Education, with limited financial resources at their disposal, have traditionally received funding to assist in providing these inputs from external lending and/or donor agencies such as USAID, the World Bank, UNESCO, CIDA, and the British Overseas Department.

While fully acknowledging the critical role of government and the educational managers in finding solutions to these problems, there is also a role for the teachers' colleges. This is particularly evident in those areas such as: the acquisition and use of a variety of teaching skills, and of attitudes and dispositions that foster learning (Ryan & Cooper, 1996). It may be argued that the teachers' college programs need to be informed by the list of concerns identified by these teachers. The colleges are strategically placed for intervention in the problem areas. This is especially true given the degree of autonomy the colleges, together with the University of the West Indies, as the accreditation body for teachers, exercise over the programs and the fact that they can initiate courses of action on matters of professional teacher concern without having to wait on the political directorate.

The apparent unwillingness, or inability, of teachers to use different teaching techniques may imply a lack of confidence in their ability to effectively use a broad range of pedagogical strategies in the

classroom—a lack of confidence that may be a function of their level of mastery of the skills acquired during their training. It is, therefore, particularly important that the teachers' colleges pay careful attention to factors that influence student learning and attitude. Given their critical role in the preparation of teachers, college programs need to reflect and address the concerns of practicing teachers and, at the same time, to equip their graduating teachers both with an effective repertoire of teaching skills and competencies, and with the requisite attitudes and dispositions that foster learning. Yet, given the emphasis on content knowledge and on written assessment in teacher education programs, some questions may be raised about the efficacy of current programs in providing candidates with adequate opportunities to acquire and master the necessary classroom skills and competencies.

Furthermore, the several apparent contradictions in the attitude and perceptions of Caribbean elementary teachers with respect to the inter-relationships between their own classroom behaviors and instructional approaches, on the one hand, and student attitudes and learning, on the other, also represents an area that ought to be addressed more forcefully in current training programs. This would perhaps require teachers to deal more reflectively with the important area of their own professional attitudes and beliefs as practitioners, and with the professional and philosophical, as opposed to the academic, nature of their training. The research is quite clear that teacher beliefs and their understandings about content and pedagogy influence both their classroom behaviors and their instructional decisions (e.g., Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992; Ross, 1994; Wilson, Konopak, Readance, 1994).

While inputs from the teachers' colleges are not sufficient to resolve the problems in teaching social studies, they are yet clearly necessary in helping to address the perceived concerns of teachers. As Kagan (1992) notes, the nature of the teacher education program is one of three major factors effecting the professional growth of teachers—the others being: teacher biography, and the school/classroom context. Teacher education programs, however, are undeniably important places to promote the development of teacher skills and attitudes that foster learning. In any event, there appears to be some important implications here for effective teacher education programs in the Caribbean—even beyond the obvious need to expand the output of formally prepared teachers—and the need to reconceptualize the teacher education paradigm.

In this context, some desirable directions for future research include: (a) the professional and philosophical beliefs of Caribbean teachers, and the difference and changes in their professional growth from the status of novice, untrained teachers, through "inservice" and trained non-graduates, to professionally prepared graduate teachers;

and (b) the factors that influence their classroom behaviors and instruction practices. Further research is also needed into the perceptions of both teachers and students with respect to the problems faced in the teaching of social studies and citizenship in Caribbean schools, as well as documenting the realities of Caribbean classrooms and teacher education programs. These areas of research can yield information critical to developing effective social studies education and teacher education programs in the future.

Note

¹ The independent states are: Jamaica, The Bahamas, Antigua-Barbuda, St.. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, St.. Lucia, St.. Vincent, Grenada, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, and Belize. The British dependencies are: The British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands and Monserrat.

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Sociological Imagination, Stories, and Learning to be Literate¹

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One of my most vivid memories of youth is a championship boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Ernie Terrell that my father and I watched one Saturday afternoon on the "Wide World of Sports." It was early in Ali's championship years, before he refused the Vietnam War, but after he had knocked out Sonny Liston without a punch. Terrell was enormous, skilled and brave enough to have taunted Ali before the fight by refusing to call him by his new Muslim name. Terrell referred to his opponent as Cassius Clay—Ali's given name, but one he now associated with slavery. As I remember, it was only a short time before Ali began to pummel Terrell. He wouldn't knock Terrell out though, and my father dismissed Ali as "a light puncher"—thinking he couldn't finish Terrell off. It was clear, however, that Ali was keeping Terrell on his feet with punches as he repeatedly asked Terrell "what's my name?" And in retrospect it wasn't just Terrell who was being asked forcefully to recognize Ali's new name. Rather it was my father, me and all of America being told to acknowledge that the old order was being challenged by new sets of ideas, goals, and people. I begin with this story for two reasons:

First, Ali's performance presented clearly his sociological imagination. That term, coined by C. Wright Mills, suggests an ability to create possible reconstructions of larger social forces which affect our lives. Ali's efforts to reclaim the power to name oneself and the world shows that this ability is not limited to sociologists. Rather anyone might employ sociological imagination in order to explore problems which beset her or him in efforts to find greater freedom for her or himself and others. Within the context of sociological imagination, Terrell's psychological ploy to upset an opponent becomes a metaphoric struggle between two publics—one denying the rights of the other for personal gain; the other attempting to change the rules of naming in America for all African Americans. Ali's trouble with his name was not just his own; rather it was a public issue with a long and tragic history for African Americans struggling for recognition.

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It's my contention that much of our discussion about schooling and literacy education in the United States during my lifetime (and I'm 50) has been a reaction to many groups using their sociological imaginations within struggles to be recognized as being present, as being capable makers of culture, and as being worthy of respect. Ali was and is admired worldwide not only for his pugilistic skills, but more for his ability to make these struggles for recognition visible to all. These struggles pushed across cultural and social fields in the United States, pressing upon traditional institutional structures, behaviors patterns, values, and social theories and causing all to respond to difference. Struggles over dialect, the canon, cognitive styles, access to resources, languages, standards - all these issues are at least associated with struggles for recognition. Whether dragging their feet, running in circles or offering a helping hand, literacy educators have attempted to address the many groups asking "what's my name?" Today's talk looks at our current answers to this question in its various forms.

The second reason to begin with a story over 30 years old is because the lessons I learned from it—things aren't often what they appear to be, personal troubles are often public issues, and symbols don't speak for themselves—are still true today. I start with a story because stories are important to people, politics and education. Stories are how people make sense of themselves and their worlds. In a real sense, stories make people. For these reasons, stories are political. Whose stories get told? What can these stories mean? Who benefits from their telling? These are political questions because they address the ways in which people's identities—their beliefs, attitudes, and values—are created and maintained. These identities determine how we live together in and out of schools as much as school rules or governmental laws.

Stories set parameters for our thinking as we blend the stories we've read, heard, and seen with the events in our lives that also seem to come to us as stories. That is, we read our lives as if they were texts and we negotiate meaning from and with those texts. Despite what governments want us to believe, texts are more than written language on a page or screen. Texts are the symbols that surround us in our daily lives that we must interpret for the meaning in our lives. Our abilities to interpret and negotiate meaning from texts makes us literate. Our abilities to use that literacy in order to make sense of our lives, histories, and cultures, to make connections between our lives and those of others, and to take action upon what we learn about ourselves and the world gives us some power and enables us to have some control over our lives.

Today I hope to tell 3 more stories—one about a kindergartner's birthday party, one I've come to call Caliphonication, and one about our daughter, Laura, in eighth grade.

One of the benefits of being teachers is that most nights our family has dinner together. It's a ritual to ask each other what we did during the day. Laura reports that her day at school was "tolerable." I say something exciting about pushing keys after long period of sitting. Tim regales us with his exploits during recess at the Friends School. And Kathleen tells of her life teaching reading in rural Pennsylvania. One Friday she reported that five year old Justin Ostrowsky had invited his entire kindergarten class to his birthday party. We laughed about the size of the party—21 kids! Tim mentioned it was a strategy to increase Justin's number of presents. Laura remembered the picture book *Moira's Birthday Party* in which Moira negotiated with her parents to invite Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6 AND Kindergarten. On the following Monday, however, Kathleen reported that no one had attended Justin's party. He gave a party and nobody came.

Upon Kathleen's words Tim uttered "Geez" as his chin hit his chest. Laura asked what happened, and we began to deconstruct one of the saddest events that I can recall from 27 years of teaching. I've had students accidentally shoot their parents; a parent abduct his child during divorce proceedings; children steal from one another-, teens become pregnant; kids without clean clothes, homes or coats in winter, preadolescents smoke crack; kindergartners with burns, lice, black eyes. In each instance I was sad, startled, angry, but had some idea about how to respond—what to do—Call somebody. Bring something. Visit some place. No one attending a five year old's birthday party seems small in comparison. Some people don't ever celebrate birthdays and live productive lives. But here was a case of a deliberate act. No one came. It could not have happened by chance. These five year olds, and perhaps their families, had to talk this over and decide, eh? Where did these kids learn to do this—to exclude someone so completely? Or perhaps where did they fail to unlearn this? The answer to either question is...at school.

While we may learn to exclude at home, in church, from the media, we should unlearn it at school because schools are the most public institution remaining in society. Granted, school districts limit us and residences within district keep us apart. But still, it's the one place where classes, races, sexualities, religions come together. At school we experience difference on a daily basis. And how we deal with difference is what this story is all about.

I traveled to school with Kathleen the next day in order to spend some time in kindergarten. The kindergartners and the teacher know me as Mr. Mrs. Shannon because I've tagged along before. I talked throughout the morning with all 20 kindergartners and their teacher Caroline Shaffer. Some of what we discussed was Justin and his birthday—often in passing, but once or twice I asked several questions to probe deeper into five year olds' logic. I learned that his peers consid-

ered Justin: a booger, a loser, a dope, a boy, a dummy, a fag, a biter, a pig. He was thought to be messy, dirty, loud, scary, slow. From his teacher, I learned that Justin and his mother moved to town in November when his father was sent to prison for robbery, and she reported that "he never fit in here." His mother, Joyce, works two part-time jobs (up to seven-two hours a week at minimum wage), and his grandmother watches him and his two younger siblings while they sleep. If you want a good idea of what working that way feels like, you might read Barbara Ehrenreich's piece in the April issue of *Harper's Magazine*—it's called, "Almost Making It."

This is a lot to learn about a five year old boy in one morning. From my observations on perhaps three visits to the kindergarten over the academic year, Justin is smaller than most in the class. He's louder than some; less active than many; he speaks through his nose, it seems, because his lips barely move and his tone is nasal. On the day that I interviewed students, he had the image of Stone Cold Steve Austin on his tanktop. This is practically a uniform for him because in my notes from previous visits I found that he wore a WWF tee-shirt each time. He watched Steve Austin wrestle live in April at the Convention Center on our campus. My notes state that Justin knew that Mr. Austin had wrestled in obscurity (Justin's word) for a decade before the world learned of his special power. Justin had learned to tell time so that he could be sure to watch the WWF on several TV channels each week. In short, Justin is an authority on professional wrestling in the truest sense of that word.

On that Tuesday Justin's hair stood straight up early in the morning but gravity took its toll by 10:00. He did not copy the assigned boardwork which told of the teacher's plans for the day. He would not read his assigned sentence from his basal during Reading. During a class discussion, he did not know where California was or why anyone would want to live there. Caroline, his teacher, said that this was typical. Much of the morning he sat at his desk separate from the others. His attempts to talk with others were rebuffed by them or dissuaded by his teacher. His efforts to make physical contact with classmates or to stand close to others led to their retreat. His reading buddy—a third grader named Thor—refused to work with him, muttering that Justin couldn't read. I must admit that I had not noticed Justin's isolation in my prior visits, but it was clear and real when I paid attention.

So how does a five year old become a social pariah in a group of 20? His teacher and the principal could not name a single incident in which he had been in trouble. Not one child offered an explicit example when Justin had acted badly toward them. He was just different from them. To begin, Justin is poor—he qualifies for free lunch and free breakfast. But then again so do 52 percent of the school population. His grandmother rents a trailer in the park adjacent to the school

grounds, but so do two other kindergartners and more than 20 students in higher grades. Let me be clear, these are social markers in this school. Class sets a hierarchy which draws lines separating kids from town and all others. Even among trailer park kids there is a pecking order between owners and renters. These kids live separate lives in the lunch room and on the playground. And apparently these boundaries follow groups into the classroom. But even taking all these issues into account, Justin should have been a member of a group of three in his classroom, that is, if social markers determined classroom group memberships.

This school—as all PA public schools—must deliver standards-based curricula. That is, teachers, even kindergarten teachers—must code each lesson—according to the state standards for subject areas. Recess has become something called, directed physical activity, if you can believe that. There are no human monitors as far as I can tell. There's only a half time principal who is rarely found in either building, I'm told. But each teacher codes his or her plan book with standards, and they conduct formal assessments three times a year to note progress. These assessments were derived from the textbooks selected for each subject: Houghton Mifflin for language arts, Addison-Wesley for mathematics etc. In November when he first arrived, Justin "failed" his first assessment because he showed ambivalence about how and why to use pencils and books. This ambivalence was exposed through the Houghton Mifflin equivalent to Marie Clay's Stones Test and a write all you can request taken from the Reading Recovery Battery. Justin's teacher—a veteran of seven years—had not seen anyone so "low" on these tasks.

In order to ensure that Justin would not remain below standards, she alerted the reading teacher, the social worker, the Instructional Support Team committee and the principal that Justin was the lowest of the low. When Kathleen, remember she's the reading teacher, asked Caroline why she referred Justin, she responded that she didn't want to be blamed for his low achievement while in her class. She wanted to document his starting point so that no one would have the same expectations for him as they might for the others. Tested, prodded and poked by many, Justin's classmates recognized his academic difference. His classmates whose families also rented homes in the park were the ones who labeled Justin a "loser" and a "dummy" during my inquiry about his birthday party.

Apparently without anyone consciously trying to exclude Justin, he became a social isolate within his classroom, alienated to the point at which 20 kindergartners would decide not to go to his birthday party which advertised cake, ice cream, and a hose(?). Without conscious effort, the state of Pennsylvania contributed to his isolation by promoting a school atmosphere in which differences were identified and

treated as deficiencies. After all, what does the term standard mean? I don't mean the creative spins that neoliberal politicians or, as Susan Ohanian calls them, educrats put on it. But the first connotation that comes to mind. Standard! Teachers at this school were complicit in Justin's forced alienation as his teacher noted the markers of separation—little paper and pencil literacy, poverty, not fitting in—but did little to address the situation beyond her proposed academic tagteam tactics to make him standard. I am not advocating that Caroline neglect Justin's or anyone else's reading and writing. However, I am asking her—all of us really—to acknowledge how we contribute to the social isolation of students when we slip so easily into the standards mentality and let our thoughts of literacy be reduced to reading and writing alphabetic texts in particular ways. When we do, we begin to devalue the oral language fluencies, the knowledge of popular culture (which in Summer Valley includes hunting, fishing and animal husbandry) or even the emotional and social lives of our students in and out of our classrooms.

The establishment of cross cultural associations and friendships should be central to our literacy teaching. But I don't find standards in any subject area which address this essential concern for Justin and all of us really. In this school, teachers state that there is no need for cross-cultural work because "everyone is White here." While such statements might imply a certain sensitivity to issues of race, they do not leave the impression that these teachers consider white to be a racial category. Moreover, such statements suggest that gender, social class, and other cultural categories receive little attention. If we conceive of literacy as negotiating meaning for and from symbols in order to understand ourselves and others then we cannot let these issues stand personally or socially. Justin's birthday party is certainly his personal tragedy, but his isolation is a social issue that should be taken up in our literacy programs. We might ask ourselves: How do language and other symbols contribute to social exclusions? How do we use and interpret these symbols in ways that contribute to the social construction of nerds, 'hos, cheerleaders, and losers? Which social structures discourage us from considering these questions?

In California, if school were in session right now, they'd be phonicating. This may seem like a non sequitur. But bear with me please, I hope to make the connection shortly. As you may have heard the California legislature has decided that everyone in California should speak English at school—except in foreign language programs such as Spanish. Also legislators have declared that unchanging reading test scores (California reading test scores have not fallen as advertised) are caused by a mistake in curriculum rather than by California's low per pupil spending, their lack of school libraries, or 1,000 emergency teaching licenses issued to uncertified teachers in urban elementary and sec-

ondary schools. To raise their test scores, the legislature has passed laws requiring the explicit teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics in elementary schools and all remedial reading programs at any grade level. All teacher education programs are supposed to prepare teachers accordingly and all public school professional development programs are supposed to teach nothing but ...

Legislators argued that California scores remained constant because California teachers did not know how to teach reading or writing properly. Each literacy teacher must learn or relearn to teach phonemic segmentation and blending and its print corollary phonics. Moreover, they were asked to learn this new approach within a short period of time. Learning from the last curricular mandates of 1987—when teachers were directed to avoid teaching nothing but phonics in primary grades—the legislature and State Department of Education provided substantial amounts of state funding for corrective professional development. AB 1086 legislation required that state funding for reading and writing inservice instruction must concern itself with phonetic code and explicit teaching. Venders were invited to apply to provide this inservice. The process was formal and statewide. That is, each venders had to be state approved by a small appointed committee. The application required vender to respond to 25 state criteria, to provide a complete outline with materials to be used during the intended training, and to sign an oath that the vender would not use the terms “context clues, inventive spelling, or cueing systems.” Nor could you encourage the teachers to invite readers to “guess at words.” The process denied Connie Weaver, Susan Ohanian, Sandra Wilde, Brenda Power, Bobbi Fisher, and past president of NCTE, Carol Avery the right to be venders providing state funded professional development for literacy educators in California. The Committee did, however, accept applications from SRA/McGraw Hill, The Wright Group, Language Links, Rigby, and the Success for All Foundation in Baltimore—all with products to sell California teachers.

This is as clear a case of deskilling as you may find. Teachers’ understanding of teaching reading and writing is deemed irrelevant; their teaching practices are outlawed, so to speak; and new standardized understandings and practices are to supplant their own. So in answer to my question—which social structures discourage us from thinking about literacy in more inclusive ways—we find that state legislatures, state departments of education, but also commercial publishers and cognitive scientists who claim that if you hold of life constant and make things statistically equal then they know how everyone’s mind works and how they learn best. And they have computer models to demonstrate this knowledge. All everyone needs to learn to read and writing are sounds and letters, and all will end

well...Tell that to Justin Ostrowsky on the Monday after his birthday party.

All these structures deny the recognition of difference in the name of abstract, often esoteric standards. Quick someone tell me what virgules are?...Why, they are the double slashes in a website address, and they are required content knowledge in Pennsylvania. If you didn't know that, you'd have to bone up to teach in The Friendly State.

In California they have an answer for your lack of knowledge or unwillingness to learn such information. When the Santa Barbara school district balked at the legislated changes, citing improved scores and successful bilingual education programs designed according to the old state curricula, School Board member Lanny Ebenstein and Ruth Green, a parent of an elementary school-aged child, approached David H. Packard, Jr. (founder of Hewlett-Packard Corporation) to fund the adoption of the Open Court Language Arts basal series to provide correct reading instruction for all students. Packard agreed to provide the funding, if all teachers were required to follow the scientific basis of the commercial materials. Superintendent Michael Caston and Deputy Superintendent Deborah Flores polled their teachers and received a petition with over 500 names of elementary teachers who opposed the adoption and the conditions. Who prevailed? You should find Open Court books on each student's desk in every classroom in Santa Barbara. They should be open to the same page at each grade level for four hours per day because as Ms. Green reported in the Santa Barbara NewsPress, "This calls for leadership that goes against the recommendations of the teachers."

So the dialectic relationships among the state, educational science, and business works in different ways in different contexts. In many cases (perhaps most), however, it works to deny difference among students and among teachers. Students and teachers seeking recognition in today's schools as being present, as being capable makers of culture, and as being worthy of respect are told to get in line or be left behind as we go "roaring and united into the next century with the American Dream alive for everyone" as President Clinton is so fond of saying when he speaks about the function of schooling in society and the need for standards in education. I presume that is the "this" that Ms. Green used as her criterion for ignoring teachers' better judgment in the Santa Barbara Open Court adoption. President Clinton, Ms. Green, the states, science, business and much of the media, all seem willing to sacrifice students' and teachers' difference and freedom in the name of an economic promise. That is, they promise students that if they will meet the standards they will be well on the way to reaching the American Dream. In the written text of President Clinton's speeches, both American and Dream are capitalized as if this abstraction were a

single entity for all or one copyrighted by his administration. Teachers are told that if they will ensure that students reach the standards, then they will regain their respected place in society.

Both teachers' and students' lives at school are to be harnessed to economic interests of the country. In this sense, standard learning, teaching, and lives are patriotic because they are expected to make our businesses flourish in the global market. All we need do is to forget what literacy is and to forego our rights and abilities to name ourselves as Muhammad Ali demonstrated for us thirtysome years ago.

Is this a good deal for most students, most teachers, most citizens? Even if the neo-liberal projections about the economy were correct, I would answer, "no". But those economic projections are fanciful for most Americans. For example if Justin's mother works 72 hours per week at minimum wage for 52 weeks (because she receives no benefits at either part-time job), she makes about \$19,000 for her family of five. That's \$500 over the poverty line. If she slips to 60 hours a week, then she falls \$2000 below that line, which was drawn 1963 in order to determine the minimum caloric needs of each American. That's six ten-hour days for a high school graduate, who manages to read a about book a week ("trashy novels mostly"). Despite the government's rhetoric to the contrary, the US economy is not producing enough good jobs to end poverty without the shaky earned income credits or the continuous rise of the minimum wage to a livable income level. Moreover, the majority of new jobs do not pay enough to enable the poor to crawl over the poverty line permanently. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, report, *The American Workforce 1992-2005*, over half of the total job growth has been and will be in occupations that require only a high school education and pay close to minimum wages. Contingent work (temporary, contract, leased, and part-time jobs) is expected to outnumber permanent, full-time employees by the turn of the twenty-first century.

This is not just bombthrowing anarchist talk. Rather, former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich stated that in 1995 he had "a profound sense that economic forces are out of control—that neither hard work nor general economic improvement will lead to higher incomes". In her book, *It Takes a Nation*, Princeton economist, Rebecca Blank stated that ever since 1993 "the proportion of Americans who are poor actually rises at the same time as the aggregate economy is expanding. Behind these dry statistics lies one of the most discouraging facts for American social policy; an expanding economy no longer guarantees a decline in poverty." In 1996, Harvard economist, John Kenneth Gailbraith explained: "What is not accepted and indeed is little mentioned is that the underclass is integrally a part of a larger economic process and more importantly, that it serves the living standard and the comfort of the more favored community...the economically fortu-

nate, not excluding those who speak with greatest regret of the existence of the poor are heavily dependent on its presence.” Reich again in 1997:

I came to Washington thinking the answer was simply to provide the bottom half with access to the education and skills they need to qualify for better jobs. But it's more than that. Without power, they can't get the resources for good schools and affordable higher education or training. Powerless, they can't even guarantee safe workplaces, maintain a livable minimum wage, or prevent sweatshops from reemerging. Without power, they can't force highly profitable companies to share the profits with them. Powerless, they're as expendable as old pieces of machinery.

Reich suggests that half of all Americans are powerless in the current economy. In their book, *America: Who Stole the Dream*, Pulitzer-prize winner reporters from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Donald Barlett and James Steele, set that figure higher, that is, if wealth equals power. To make their explanation understandable they use a metaphor of a 300 family town to stand for America. To give you a hint about their conclusions they name their town “Inequalitiesville.” In that town three families control 30% of the wealth. An additional 27 families own another 37% of its wealth. Translated that means that 10% of all Americans possess 67% of its wealth and the remaining 90% control one third of the nation's wealth. These figures place 90% of Americans in the powerless category which Reich mentions.

Virtually no one argues that 50 to 90 percent of Americans—those with relatively little wealth or power—have failed to reach educational standards. The state, educational science, business, the media are wrong in their basic assumptions. Clearly, individual or collective economic gain cannot serve as the legitimate reason for requiring students and teachers to forfeit the recognition of difference or their freedom in order to learn standards for reading and writing. As Stanley Aronowitz writes “if the job culture proves to have been a historically- situated way of measuring value, then the ethical basis of contemporary life requires re-examination and within it, the goals and purpose of schools.” And that is why we are gathered at this conference to rethink the bases of public schooling and to stretch our sociological imaginations about possible relationships between the individuals and groups and school structures.

One last story as promised. Eighth grade is stressful. Hormones are popping like ping pong balls in a lottery tumbler. Fashion takes a slight “Dawson's Creek” twist of swagger or sluttishness. The phone becomes an appendage of every thirteen year-old body. Yet I'll admit that Kathleen and I sent Laura to a local middle school with a certain

amount of hope for the future—both immediate and distant. We'd been told that the eighth-grade curriculum required extensive reading, thinking, and writing. We were heartened when Laura's social studies teacher asked her class on the third day of school to write a paragraph describing "a time when the phrase 'responsibility is freedom' has been true in your school life."

Laura knew what she was expected to write (this was her third year at the middle school). "How I got all A's on my report card, and Daddy gave me a dollar," she said in the sarcastic tone that 13 year olds adopt (for a short time, I hope). We asked her if she agreed with such simple tales and encouraged her to think deeply about the task. "This is your chance to have your ideas taken seriously," I suggested. Laura went to her room and wrote:

"Responsibility is freedom" sounds like a party slogan from 1984. George Orwell called the combination of opposites "double think." My first association with freedom is "get to do what I want." Whereas with responsibility, it's obligation to do what other people say. They don't seem to go together. In general, the combination means if you are considerate and respectful of the society which you are in and complete your obligations to the society, you will gain control over your own life as an individual and get the chance to make more decisions for yourself (OK, I know if everyone did whatever they wanted, it would be anarchy.) I think the general case doesn't work at our middle school. At the middle school, there are only freedoms from, not freedom to. If we are responsible as defined by teachers and school rules, we can make choices between A, B, or C, but we are never allowed to decide what A, B, and C should be. If school is to prepare us as citizens, then perhaps it should help us use freedom responsibly.

It ain't John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, but then I heard Mill was a bit older than 13 when he penned that essay. With her paragraph, Laura demonstrates that she is ready to take up the issues of freedom and responsibility seriously in schools. She employs her sociological imagination as clearly as Muhammad Ali because she ties her private problem—a lack of freedom—with a public issue—school structures which prevent students from practicing democratic citizenship. She imagines a possible ideal situation, and then, evaluates her current circumstances as insufficient. She recognizes that currently the structures of schooling limit freedom, but she hopes that schools can help her become a better citizen by teaching her and allowing her and her peers to formu-

late options and choose among them. Beyond reading and writing, Laura demonstrates her literacy by negotiating a different meaning of the symbols behind the phrase "responsibility is freedom" She uses that negotiated meaning to connect her own frustrations, other students' troubles, and the structures of her middle school. And she attempts to make her meaning public by implicitly inviting her teacher and classmates to discuss how schooling might become more democratic.

Her teacher, working from a state standard concerning writing in Social Studies which she sincerely believes will help her students obtain the high skill/high wage jobs waiting for them, responded with the grade of B- (her teacher justified her grading with concern for Laura's topic and concluding sentence and the doubt that Laura really understood the meaning of the original phrase). She never raised the issue in class. You see, the content of the paragraph was deemed unimportant compared to its form.

One way to help Laura, Justin, and California teachers is to tell their stories so that others may see connections between their own lives and social structures that dissuade us from teaching democracy and democratically. One way to help yourselves is to take up your personal stories and troubles as symbols of larger social issues. To do so is to demonstrate the best of what literacy has to offer us.

Social Education Through a Marxist Postmodernist Lens: Towards a Revolutionary Multiculturalism

McLaren, Peter. (1997). *Revolutionary Multiculturalism: Pedagogies of Dissent for the New Millennium*. Boulder: Westview. Paper \$27.00, ISBN 0-8133-2571-4.

Review by *MARC PRUYN*, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, 88003-8001.

In a world where history has already been purchased by the wealthy, the losers have no choice but to steal some of history back again. (McLaren, 1997, p. 170)

Jonathan, a former conservative military man—now in his mid-twenties and with long hair, worn Levi's, Birkenstocks and a neo-liberal political orientation—is a student in my teacher education social studies course. Two thirds of the way through our seventeen week semester he raises his hand and smugly asks, with a wry grin on his unshaven face, "Dr. Pruyne, when do we start learning about social studies?" This question was asked, this challenged mounted, during my first year as a professor.

I teach in the Chihuahuan borderlands of the Southwestern United States—forty-five minutes from Mexico. And now, several years later, I suppose Jonathan had good reason to ask the question he did. If one had been socialized to understand and do schooling throughout the Reagan/Bennett 1980s—characterized as they were by the acontextualized three Rs of the back-to-basics movement, the teacher-proofing of curricula and the tired but ever-popular metaphor of school-as-factory (with its classroom over-crowding and teacher "accountability" schemes connected to testing students using gender-, class- and culturally-biased norm-referenced tests)—it's no wonder that my social studies class, inspired by cultural studies, critical pedagogy and multiculturalism, would seem odd, foreign and "Other" to Jonathan and the vocal minority of students like him; it did not fit the guiding hegemonic understanding of what schooling should be in this late-capitalist, postmodern, globalized society. The bottom line is that I teach multiculturalism—although I teach it in the guise of "social studies." This is because, for me, social studies is the investigation of human

social interaction. And what better way to delve into the inner-workings of human social interaction than to look at culture (albeit "culture" writ large: not just ethnicity, but also class, gender, sexual orientation, size, faith, age, etc.). And why not explore it *revolutionarily*? Hence, McLaren's work.

I'm a white-appearing multi-ethnic male. That, along with the cultural capital that being a professor affords me, usually gets me in the door with my students. But soon, after healthy doses of Enid Lee (1994), Louise Derman-Sparks (1989), James Loewen (1995), bell hooks (1994a, 1994b), Howard Zinn (1994, 1995), and especially Peter McLaren (1986, 1989, 1995, 1997, 1998), the tide often turns—at least among the 5-25% of my students like Jonathan (see Pruyn, 1999b). I have been accused of "hating whites" and even being a "race traitor." Students have tearfully implored me not to have ethnicity (or multiculturalism) as one of the foci in my course, announcing that, "But, Dr. Pruyn, I never owned slaves!" This past year, a student rose and unabashedly asked the doctoral student teaching one of my sections, "What does *race* have to do with social studies?" Indeed.

Later, as each semester inevitably progresses, most students come to at least understand, if not partially embrace, the radical educational paradigm forwarded by the authors cited above. But this is not an easy or painless process for them. These teacher education students have been socialized—hegemonized—to think of schooling and diversity in very limiting and "whitened" ways. And it is my job as a critical teacher educator to challenge, shock and expose them to competing visions of social reality and alternative/liberating forms of pedagogy. And the Marxist-inspired "revolutionary multiculturalism" theorized and elaborated by Peter McLaren, from the volume of the same name, helps in that endeavor. In this work (1997), McLaren is provocative, poetic, practical, visionary, antagonistic and highly theoretical all at the same time as he critically examines multicultural theory and practice in education—and the larger society—from a perspective of activist neo- and cultural-Marxism. This is why I assign him for reading in social studies. And this is why the book should be required reading not just in education, but also among students and professors of cultural studies, political science, sociology, anthropology and linguistics.

In this essay review, I will elaborate, analyze and critique four of the most important themes McLaren weaves throughout his volume. These themes include liberatory pedagogy, global capitalism & Marxism, postmodern theory and revolutionary multiculturalism.

McLaren & Liberatory Educational Praxis

Throughout *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*, McLaren consistently lives one of the central notions of critical pedagogy: read your world, and then take your reading of the world and re-read the word (Freire

& Macedo, 1987). He reads predatory culture and postmodern capitalism through its simulacra; through the lecture halls, cafes, classrooms, poetry slams and hip-hop ballads of Gotham-West—El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles—the megalopolis that is L.A. (Pruyn, 1999a). McLaren draws the connections between the world as it exists and the world and word as it *could* exist. Our current economic condition is dehumanizing, grotesque and brutal. Because of it, Cuba and Iraq are being economically strangled; over 30,000 of the world's children starve to death every day; and pre-teen girls work the Nike & Tommy Hilfigger sewing machines 14 hours a day, six days a week in Jakarta and Ciudad Juárez. McLaren tells it like it is—in the eloquent poetry of a Marxism that understands the discursive lessons learned from postmodernism while not succumbing to its potentially atomizing and self-defeating over-localization of struggle in its project to throw the metanarrative out with the bath water. Yet he also shows us the hope, struggles and victories that we have already achieved—or that are just within our reach: the work of the UNITE! (the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees—formerly the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union) and Justice for Janitors; campaigns for human and economic rights waged by students and campesinos in Chiapas; and many others. He then turns that reading of the world into a re-reading of the word, of the theory of critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1997):

Critical pedagogy is ultimately a dream, but one that is dreamed in the wakefulness of praxis. This is because an individual cannot say he or she has achieved critical pedagogy if he or she stops struggling to attain it...Critical pedagogy, in this sense, remains committed to the practical realization of self-determination and creativity on a collective social scale...Like Zapata, critical educators need to wage nothing less than war in the interest of the sacredness of human life, collective dignity for the wretched of the earth, and the right to live in peace and harmony. (p. 13)

In beginning his work as a radical social theorist, McLaren drew inspiration from the writings and educational/political struggles of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970)—largely considered the founder of critical pedagogy. Beginning in the 1950s, Freire worked with and then theorized about how to co-emancipate economically and racially oppressed groups—first in Brazil (Freire & Horton, 1990), and then throughout the world (Freire, 1985; Freire & Macedo, 1987). During this decades-long living praxis, critical/Freirean pedagogy took inspiration from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (see Adorno 1950,

1973/1966; Horkheimer 1940, 1947; and Marcuse 1964, 1987/1932) and began to congeal around the following goals: (1) the development within students of attitudes and capacities to view themselves as capable of taking action on their world in order to change it (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987, 1998; McLaren, 1989, 1995, 1997); (2) the self/co-liberation of students from oppressive realities faced and self-identified in their daily lives (Fischman, 1998; Freire, 1970, 1985); and (3), the enhancement of student "literacies" and "academic competencies" (Freire, 1970; Frankenstein, 1992; McLaren, 1989, 1995).

Critical pedagogy seeks to make visible the political nature of schooling, and the effects of unequal, often oppressive, power relations that characterize schooling in our society. This theory of teaching and learning challenges widely held pedagogical "truths," with particular emphasis placed on rebuking myths of educational "meritocracy" which attempt to present schooling as a neutral process. Critical/Freirean theory seeks to uncover who benefits and who is disenfranchised within educational systems steeped in these so-called meritocratic practices (Freire, 1985; McLaren, 1986, 1995). From such a perspective, people should be seen as "historical subjects" capable of transforming their own lived realities as they see them (Aronowitz, 1994; Apple, 1995)—as "subjects" who act on the world, as opposed to "objects" who are acted upon by others (Freire, 1970; Freire & Horton, 1990). At the heart of Freire's approach is that learners reform their identities in opposition to perceived societal problems (Freire & Faundez, 1992).

From the early-1980s onward, building on the notions advanced by Freire and other criticalists, McLaren quickly advanced to the top echelon of critical theorists working within education. McLaren—whose work has been influential in North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa and who has been translated into ten different languages—is not just a leading intellectual in the field of critical pedagogy, but is also considered by many to be one of the top critical social theorists working in the social sciences today. He draws extensively on the work of Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and Marxist political theorists. While roundly critical of positions as functionally advantageous to the reproduction of capitalist social relations of exploitation, he also carefully incorporates postmodernist perspectives (1995, 1997) into his work. He does this while continually advocating political solidarity and collective agency with oppressed groups, particularly with the working class.

In his more recent work (McLaren, 1997, 1998, in press; McLaren & Fischman, in press; McLaren, Fischman, Serra & Antelo, 1998)—including *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*—he has called for a return by educational theorists to more strongly Marxist and neo-Gramscian approaches to understanding education and the current social conditions

of almost completely unfettered global capitalist expansion. If we lose sight of the central role class relations and exploitation play in educational contexts and elsewhere, he cautions, our analyses will be incomplete and our successes in struggling for social justice few and far between. And we as social educators should take most seriously this cause of educating and struggling for social justice.

Global Capital and an Alternative Marxist Project

We practice our craft within expressive culture, but such a culture needs to be located within a systemic entity known as global capitalism. As such, we never leave its circuits of subordination, of commodification... Educators, especially, need to politicize their readers against the violent thrall of capital, to menace their social apathy and haunt their "comfort zones" like a surly stranger. (McLaren, 1997, p. 46)

With words like these, *Revolutionary Multiculturalism* calls us to engage in a struggle for social justice grounded in a criticalist neo-Marxist philosophy and politics. Throughout the volume, McLaren models a more Marxian form of educational praxis than has been the norm in a late 1980s and 1990s informed more and more by postmodern forms of analysis and understanding. He shows, through example, how our work as educational theorists, researchers and practitioners could benefit from a healthy dose of *Das Kapital* as we begin to emerge from the political diaspora represented by extreme postmodernist thought—without, however, abandoning important insights gained from multiculturalism, feminism and discourse theory. Throughout *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*, McLaren focuses on what is—the relations and realities that define hyper-capitalism—and what *could be*—the Marxist analytical and political tools that could move us forward toward economic and social justice.

In laying bare and examining *what is*, McLaren gives us fleeting and shocking peep-hole glimpses into the lair of the postmodern child pornographer whose lens is always set on macro: the venture capitalist, the futures trader, the absentee landlord, the sweatshop owner, the same person who, like many of the rest of us, worships regularly and never misses an episode of "Friends"—"What antics and high-jinks will Monica and Chandler be up to this week?"; that is, the guy who is out to accumulate a little surplus value. This individual is not necessarily bad, the system that produces him is; the system that produces such inequities, divisions and exploitative relationships in the first place. McLaren (1997) notes:

Assets of the world's leading 358 billionaires exceed the combined annual incomes of approximately half the population of the globe. The war on poverty has given way to the war on the poverty-stricken. (p. 3)

The income gap is larger than ever and still growing. One third of the children in the United States live in poverty. This, while Clinton recommends spending more on an arms race we have already won and for fantasy/pork barrel projects like the "Star Wars."¹ McLaren informs us that U.S. multinationals are being further enriched by NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement)—and GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade)—as workers' standards of living continue to decline and the air, water and soil are further poisoned on both the Mexican and U.S. sides of the border. The poor, women, people of color, immigrants and the young are demonized and super-exploited—around the world and in North America's growing internal Third Worlds. And reality is turned on its head through hegemonic instantiations of popular culture and mainstream media. The questions being posed are "Who has Bill slept with this month?" or "Will 'Liddy' Dole be able to raise as much money as the Lone Star State's favorite son?", not "Why have obscenely profitable North American corporations fired tens of thousand more of their U.S. workers this quarter?" or "How many people of color have 'New York's Finest' tortured or beaten to death this week?" And education—always several steps behind, but always in sink, with its corporate master—follows suit. Businesses and parents are seen as our "customers"; scores on standardized tests vomited up by indentured students are our "products"; school "choice" and "privatization" are our watchwords; the line is sped-up.

After startling us with what is, McLaren inspires us with what *could be*.² He envisions a newly re-invigorated Marxist analysis and politics in academia—and in and amongst the communities that we purport to serve—as a viable alternative to the politics-as-usual that defines much of what we currently do. He sees the benefits of "recogniz[ing] the enabling aspects of the Marxist revolutionary model in its promotion of critical consciousness and its criticisms of dominant research programs within the bourgeois academy" (1997, p. 62). It is not just a re-hoisting of the banner of class struggle that is called for in this work (although that is central), but a living political Marxism and activism; that is, a walking of the walk, not just a talking of the talk—both within our university and K-12 classrooms in assuming liberatory stances with our students and in social movements (in immigrant communities fighting for human rights, in union halls and on picket lines and in front of women's health clinics). McLaren calls for us within education to move beyond the tourist and liberal approaches

to multiculturalism (those dear to the mainstream educational establishment and to popular culture) and the manufactured hegemonic identities and "Must See TV" subject positions they produce—"Tonight, on a very special Suddenly Susan: Susan's Asian neighbor confronts her socially constructed 'Otherness'." Now that's an episode I'd watch! The following quote effectively summarizes McLaren's desire to both re-centralize Marxist analyses and to spark a new political activism in academia:

In attempting to develop a project premised on the construction of an emancipatory cultural imaginary that is directed at transforming the conditions that create the victims of capitalist expansion, educators need to go beyond simply serving their arterial connections to the forces of production and consumption that defraud them through the massification of their subjectivities and that kill poor people who cannot afford food or heating oil in the winter. They need to create new alliances through a politics of difference...In a world of global capitalism we need counterhegemonic global alliances through cultural and political contact in the form of critical dialogue...Unless educators are able to forge...alliances with gay and lesbian organizations, worker movements, and the struggles of indigenous peoples, present and future generations face the prospect of becoming extensions of multinational corporations within the larger apparatus of capitalist expansion and in the service of unequal accumulation and further underdevelopment...(1997, pp. 68 & 69)

Understanding & Situating the Postmodern

Beginning in his work of the late 1980s, McLaren has consistently taken seriously the claims, challenges and insights raised by theorists and researchers working in the field of postmodern social theory. And he continues this line of skeptical inquiry in *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*. From my perspective as a critical educational theorist, these forays into the postmodern have proven quite useful. McLaren has taken from this intellectual tradition what has shown to be helpful in understanding social/economic/cultural conditions and the role discourse plays in creating, maintaining and/or restructuring relations of power between us as human beings. But he has also been cautious. He rightfully insists on maintaining strong connections to Marxian forms of analysis that seem to more adequately explain the current economic reality on the ground, while he remains critical of postmodern theory's tendency to de-centralize collective political struggle and agency.

Understood in general terms, postmodern theory positions itself against the encompassing and deterministic nature of the modernist Enlightenment project, and the metanarratives that guide it. As McLaren notes, postmodernism—as elaborated in the work of Jacques Derrida (1973, 1981, 1994), Jean-François Lyotard (1984, 1989) and Laclau & Mouffe (1985), to name just a few—marks the “social rupturing of the unitary fixity and homogenizing logic of the grand narratives of Western European thought” (1995, p. 13). From this point of view, there is more of a focus on local and diffuse power and struggles within discourse, as opposed to large social changes and phenomena (see Pruyn, 1999a). The social positions individuals are placed in through language, that is, their “subject positions” become the focus of inquiry and analysis. Notions such as “identity,” “ego,” “self” and even “class,” “gender” and “race” become de-emphasized (Aronowitz, 1994, p. 228; Zaretsky, 1994).

Postmodern theorists posit that discourse plays a pivotal role in how power relations are acted-out in our daily lives in the social world. They claim that after being discursively disciplined and watched by others, we begin to discipline and watch (regulate) ourselves. If we comply with the normalizing judgments of dominant discourses, we are rewarded. If we go against them, we are either seen as “abnormal” or “deviant,” ridiculed and sometimes physically punished or incarcerated (Foucault, 1977a, 1977b). It being easier to comply, we more often do so than not. Through these procedures, dominant ways of being and acting come to be seen as “natural” and “normal,” and we continue to do them. Closely paralleling Gramsci’s theory of hegemony (1971), this practice holds true not just for cultural institutions such as prisons and “madhouses,” but also for factories, households, hospitals and schools.

Postmodern theory is also helpful in noting the “linguistic turn” in social theory and analysis towards understanding the role of discourse in our lives as social beings. This turn, notes Luke, was “from an onus on rationality and cognition to one on language and discourse” (in Gee, 1990, p. viii). As a result, theorists are now more able to focus on people’s daily and subtle interactions through discourse in studying issues of power and domination. I take exception to the extremist postmodernist notion that we are almost completely positioned and predetermined as social subjects through discourse, and that this process is beyond our conscious control. I agree, however, with its recognition of the central role discourse plays in how we are positioned as subjects, and how we come to see and understand ourselves in the world.

Criticisms notwithstanding, postmodern theory is helpful in understanding the processes by which we are discursively placed in different subject positions; how we ourselves become complicit in this

process; and how this can limit us. But what, then, about individual and collective action? If identity, self, class, gender and race are no longer central issues in a project for social justice, because forms of oppression are hyper-localized, is there any possibility for individual or group agency? This is problematic. The split, multiple, atomized and diffused nature of current social conditions hypothesized by postmodernists (and others) is acknowledged and then problematized by McLaren (1997):

While some postmodernists adventitiously assert that identities can be fluidly recomposed, rearranged, and reinvented...I maintain that this is a shortsighted and dangerous argument. It would take more than an army of Jacques Lacans to help us rearrange and suture the fusillade of interpolations and subject positions at play in our daily lives. My assertion that the contents of particular cultural differences and discourses are not as important as how such differences are embedded in and related to the larger social totality of economic, social, and political differences may strike some readers as extreme. Yet I think it is fundamentally necessary to stress this point...It is true that...poststructuralist and postmodern theories have greatly expanded how we understand the relationship between identity, language, and schooling; but all too often these discourses collapse into a dehistoricizing and self-congratulatory emphasis on articulating the specifics of ethnographic methodologies and the ideological virtues of asserting the importance of naming one's location as a complex discursive site. As essential as these theoretical forays have been, they often abuse their own insights by focusing on identity at the expense of power. (pp. 7 & 17)

Following the logic of postmodern theory, agency could be reduced to enactments of internalized, discursively predetermined, unconscious scripts. McLaren agrees that there is a tendency among some postmodernists to "dissolve agency" and to claim that "we are always already produced and finalized as subjects within discourse" (1995, p. 73). These theories posit that we are positioned as subjects, but not how we can take action as historical social subjects; how we can act collectively and politically against very real oppressive structures such as capitalism, sexism, racism and homophobia. McLaren, Fischman, Serra & Antelo (1998), in critiquing Derrida's postmodernist challenge to Marxism in "Specters of Marx" (1994), note:

In this deconstruction as exorcism, Derrida disavows class struggle and establishes an international built on the unfinalizability of discourses and the impossibility of political co-ordination...Uninterested in class politics, Derrida forecloses the possibility of mounting a program of anti-capitalist struggle...Marx understood vividly in a way that Derrida does not that discourses always converge and pivot around objective labor practices and that global capitalism has a way of reshaping, re-infecting, and rearticulating dissent. (p. 3)

For social science researchers and theorists interested in examining how human beings are formed as social agents, these postmodern ways of conceiving the social are not helpful. As a critical educational theorist and practitioner, I have found it important to draw more on the insights of Marxian and critical pedagogical theory, as has been so well elaborated over the years by McLaren.

McLaren's attempts to theorize how postmodernism fits within a larger political and cultural framework of Marxist analysis and action are both helpful and bold. However, it is important to note that these theoretical efforts are still in their youth. Although McLaren began this challenging theoretical task in the early 1990s, it is clear through a careful reading of this volume that the end is not yet at hand. Cautiously bringing together insights gained from postmodern theory with a newly reinvigorated neo- and cultural-Marxism (based on re-readings and further delvings into the work of Marx, Althusser, Gramsci and the Frankfurt School), while at the same time attempting to apply these analyses and political strategies to the social, cultural and political realities of the beginning of the new millennium, is a formidable task. And while it appears that McLaren is up to the challenge, it is an on-going and as yet uncompleted task—one you can see him continuing to struggle with in *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*. While at times supporting a "resistance position," on other occasions he remains grounded in historical materialism and focused on issues of political economy, most importantly those dealing with the globalization of capitalism. Some recent published work since *Revolutionary Multiculturalism* has witnessed McLaren's unabashed return to the tradition of historical materialism, as evidenced in a recent article in *Educational Theory* (McLaren, 1998) and in his forthcoming book, *Ché Guevara, Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of Revolution* (McLaren, in press). Unlike the latter volume, *Revolutionary Multiculturalism* is a rather eclectic mixture that, amidst its important insights, at times lacks theoretical coherence.

Revolutionary Multiculturalism

While anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic struggles are urgent and important in their own right, I am suggesting that these new social movements have the common goal of transforming the exploitative social relations of global capitalism. (McLaren, 1997, p. 69)

In *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*, Peter McLaren argues for a pedagogical and social struggle of the same name. Mainstream multiculturalism needs to move beyond its calls for “diversity” and “inclusion” within curricula and society. The traditionally excluded (the working class, people of color, women, speakers of languages other than English, lesbians & gays) must abandon the assimilationist dream of asking to be invited into the master’s house (or canon). If multiculturalism is to be successful, argues McLaren, it needs to challenge the “white, Anglo, heterosexual male of bourgeois privilege” (1997, p. 214) that is at the center of this society’s socially constructed and stylized portrayal of “whiteness,” Americana and white supremacy.

McLaren’s point—drawing on Gramsci’s notion of hegemony (1971)—is that “white is right” in our society. And that is what we as social studies and multicultural educators must confront on a daily basis. “[W]hiteness has located itself in those discourses of the public and the popular in such a way (whiteness is everywhere and nowhere) that our definition of the normal and the commonsensical has been colonized” (McLaren, 1997, p. 46). Whiteness needs to be unseated from its transparent yet exalted seat of dominance and the socially constructed notion of race itself needs to be critically examined. White (and male and straight and wealthy and “non-accented” English speaking) is normal. All else, in our late capitalist and *whitewashed* society, is wrong, different and abnormal. What did the MSNBC headline read after Tara Lipinski unexpectedly beat U.S. Olympic team-mate Michelle Kwan at the Winter Games of a few years ago? “American Beats Kwan!” White is right. All else is “Other”—odd, different, exotic, un-American. McLaren comments:

Rather than stressing the importance of diversity and inclusion, as do most multiculturalists, I think that significantly more emphasis should be placed on the social and political construction of white supremacy and the dispensations of white hegemony. The reality-distortion field known as “whiteness” needs to be identified as the cultural disposition and ideology linked to specific political, social, and historical arrangements—[We need to] incorporate, yet move beyond, the politics of diversity and in-

clusion when discussing multicultural education. The discourse of diversity and inclusion is often predicated on hidden assumptions of assimilation and consensus that serve as supports for neoliberal democratic models of identity. (1997, p. 8)

McLaren illustrates the importance of first recognizing whiteness as an oppressive and superordinated category—and the white supremacy that is its aftermath—and then calls for its political, cultural and discursive destruction through an insightful examination of hip hop culture and music. This form of popular cultural expression is reviled, warning labeled and finger wagged at by the likes of Tipper Gore and most of the white adult establishment. After all, it's political, "street," sexual, violent and resists traditional hegemonic cultural norms—as, I suppose, does "Tinky Winky," with her/his refusal to conform to mainstream understandings of gender, dress, accessories adornment and sexual orientation. While hip hop artists such as Snoop Doggy Dog and 2 Live Crew are consistently labeled as sexist by critics such as Gore (and these claims have some merit), white bands who consistently use racist and misogynistic lyrics, like Guns 'N' Roses (whose "Appetite for Destruction" album cover featured a picture of a young woman who had been beaten lying slumped against the brick wall of a dirty alley with her panties left to hang absently off of one foot as blood pooled between her legs with a caption that read, "Guns 'N' Roses was here!"), receive no such similar condemnation—I wonder what the Gore daughters listen to? There is a double standard. White rage, misogyny and bias are okay. African American rage, misogyny and bias are not.

Despite routine condemnations of hip hop by white adults, the genre remains wildly popular among youth in general—regardless of race, class or gender.

White and black listeners alike are drawn to this ...form of urban apostasy, fashionable deviancy, and stylized outlawry, whose message and transgressive status dig pretty close to the eschatological roots of holy war. Gangsta rap has been accused by some middle-class whites as well as some black professionals of fomenting the anger, racial hatred, and lawlessness that led to the L.A. Uprising of 1992. Of course, in tandem with such dispatches from the bourgeoisie was a studied ignorance about the irreversible structural unemployment faced by many blacks in the inner city, the dismantling of social services, and the progressive hardening of racial lines. (McLaren, 1997, p. 156)

Despite their parents' feelings, white kids enjoy hip hop music and culture. From Los Angeles to New York to Chicago to my small university town of 70,000, one would be hard pressed not to find, on any given Saturday afternoon at the mall, scores of white youth clad in various hip hop uniforms cruising for sales, dates and a good *latté*. White kids can do this—because they are white. It is not as easy for youngsters of color to pull this trick off in reverse. As McLaren observes (1997):

We are not autonomous citizens who can fashionably choose whatever ethnic combinations we desire in order to reassemble our identity. Although the borders of ethnicity overlap and shade into one another, it is dishonest to assert that pluralized, hybridized identities are options available to all citizens in the same way (Hicks, 1991). This is because class, race, and gender stratification are objective constraints, and historical determinations restrict the choices of some groups. (pp. 7-8)

What is needed, he argues, is a complete abolition of the limiting racial construct of whiteness. It is a construct that too readily and conveniently advantages some and represses many more. In the end, he posits—following Freire—whiteness poisons both the racially oppressed and their oppressors, and at the same time, distracts us from a potential social politics of solidarity in combating the global capitalist expansion and super-exploitation that stunts us all.

Conclusion

The Clash had it right, nearly twenty years ago, when they sang about those “Washington bullets again” and implored us not to forget. And is all well? Is it okay to forget? Or to never learn, as in the case of some of our social studies students? McLaren says, “No!” *La lucha continua*. Maybe now more than ever. As the bombs continue to fall on people of color (“Otherized” Middle Easterners or Southern Europeans, to name just the latest) simply because they live under U.S.-created, -supported or -armed “despots”; as young men continue to be tortured and left for dead in the middle of the night for being gay; as Jewish pre-schoolers and Asian postal workers are gunned down because of their ethnic heritage; and as young women continue to be forced to work long hours at sub-minimum wages and in slave-like working conditions in L.A. sweatshops and the *Maquiladoras* of Ciudad Juárez, the struggle does continue.

McLaren, in citing *el abuelito*, Freire, notes that, “revolutions do not occur just because we create them in our own minds” (1997, p.

139). Indeed they don't. McLaren, in this work, advances concrete pedagogical and political suggestions toward revolutionizing multiculturalism through a radicalized social education. This text, and the ideas forwarded within it, can provide us and our students with many of the theoretical and pedagogical tools necessary for understanding how exploitations of race, class, gender and sexual orientation relate to both predatory capitalism and our postmodern condition. Through this approach, and with an unflinching and unapologetic opposition to white supremacy and global capitalism, McLaren helps us strengthen and expand the struggle for social, multicultural and economic justice that our current times demand.

But there is hope. There is resistance. There is change. I end this essay review with a passage that McLaren uses to begin *Revolutionary Multiculturalism*; a passage that engenders those three descriptors for me; a passage crafted over a strong cup of coffee under a warm Los Angeles haze in a coffee house off Santa Monica Boulevard:

...as I look out at the city from this café window, things don't seem that bad: Kid Frost pulsates through the airwaves; a 1964 Chevy Impala cruises the street in all its bravado lowrider beauty; the sun is shining bountifully on brown, black and white skin (albeit prematurely aging the latter); my gas tank is full and the ocean is reachable before the heat gets too heavy and the streets get too packed. I'll take Olympic Boulevard toward Venice, searching for that glimmer of light in the eyes of strangers, seeking out that fertile space to connect, picking through that rag-and-bone shop of lost memories, and seizing that splinter of hope at the fault line of the impossible where the foundations of a new public sphere can be fashioned out of the rubble of concrete dreams. (1997, p. 14)

Notes

¹ And by this I don't mean movie tickets to George Lucas' new campy prequel series, but Ronald Reagan's so-called Missile Defense Program that no serious scientist ever thought could really work.

² For a good discussion of what is and what could be—within the context of a critical multiculturalism in education—see Chávez Chávez & O'Donnell (1998).

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Rahima C. Wade. (Ed.) (1997). *Community-Service Learning: A Guide to Including Service in the Public School Curriculum*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 379 pages. Hardcover ISBN 0-7914-3183-5, paperback ISBN 0-7914-3184-3.

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The primary intent of *Community service learning: A guide to including service in the public school curriculum* is to "help service learning practitioners develop quality service-learning experiences for public school students, schools, and communities" (Wade, 1997, p. x). Although it was written for a broad audience, the book has a particular interest for social studies educators who have long had an interest in social action as an important component of citizenship education.

The book, organized into four sections, is a comprehensive guide to theory, practice, and potential in service learning. Part 1 consists of seven chapters written by Rahima Wade about the components of effective community service-learning programs. Part 2 contains five chapters about applications to elementary, middle school, and high school levels written by practitioners (Richard Battistoni, Carol Kinsley, Felicia George, Don Hill and Denise Clark Pope, and Susan Siegel), and Part 3, titled *Voices from the Field*, is written by people holding a variety of roles, from teacher to statewide service-learning coordinator (Donna Boynton, Tracy Thomas, Carolyn Anderson and Judith Witmer, Winifred Evers Pardo, James and Pamela Toole, David Kelly-Hedrick, John Shepard, and Cynthia Parsons). Part 4 concludes with three chapters written by Wade about challenges to effective practice, service learning in preservice teacher education, and service learning in a democratic society. The Appendix contains an extensive bibliography of resources that will be useful to practitioners in a variety of roles.

Wade's introduction to the book articulates a thoughtful rationale for community service-learning that rests on the civic mission of public schools in a democracy. This rationale is similar to arguments made by earlier social studies educators for reflective inquiry, public issues analysis, decision-making, and issues-centered social studies (Evans & Saxe, 1996). Additionally, Wade joins with contemporary critics, such as Bellah, Barber, Etzioni, Putnam, and others who have argued that in a democracy an emphasis on individualism without a complementary concern for the common good or public welfare is inadequate. Wade writes,

For a thriving democracy, we need a majority of concerned citizens willing to participate in decisions from the local

to the national level that effect their own lives and the common good. (p. 3)

Community service-learning is written in the belief that one way to achieve that goal is by making community service-learning a key component of public education.

Wade discusses the historic role in the United States of public schools educating youth for citizenship, the "failure" of the schools to achieve their potential in this area, and the implications of liberalism and republicanism for civic education in the context of American democracy. She concludes the introduction with a statement about service-learning that sounds very much like what the National Council of the Social Studies (1979) Curriculum Guidelines said about good social studies programs being composed of knowledge, abilities, valuing, and social participation. Wade writes,

Community service-learning can bring together all four essential components of civic education: intellectual understanding, participation skills, civic attitudes, and direct participation in schools and communities . (p. 14)

It is the subtle difference between the NCSS position statement and the emphasis of most community service-learning programs that concerns me. If social studies education professors use this book in a course, I hope they will complement it with readings, such as the 1979 Curriculum Guidelines, the chapter on civic action in Banks and Banks' (1999) social studies methods book, Newmann's (1975) *Education for Citizen Action*, and Engle and Ochoa's (1988) *Education for Democratic Citizenship*. What all those readings have in common, and what is not emphasized in most community service-learning programs, is the idea that to become effective citizens in a pluralistic democracy, young people ought to investigate social problems and value dilemmas that are often controversial; the students should seek solutions to problems, and voluntarily take actions to bring about change. Goals that are not necessarily captured in the service-learning literature are that students acquire knowledge about complex social issues, develop skills in problem solving when important value differences divide a community, and that they develop an interest in the political arena and a sense of political efficacy. To me, it is noteworthy that the various authors in Wade's book say little about handling controversial issues in the context of planning and executing community service-learning projects. They do, however, give much practical advice on many other aspects of establishing and sustaining programs.

In chapter 1, Wade emphasizes that effective community service-learning is not mere charity. It is community service that addresses specific pedagogical goals of academic programs. Essential components are not only curriculum integration, but also careful planning, collaboration between school and community, meaningful service, and opportunities for reflection. Wade also lists “celebration and recognition by others” as an important component to foster youth empowerment. In contrast, I believe that if students worked to influence public policies they would be more likely to develop feelings of empowerment or efficacy. Whether public recognition or policy-oriented action is more important to developing feelings of political efficacy is an empirical question, which future researchers of service-learning might explore.

In the section on research, Wade is cautious in her claims, noting “the limited research on service learning has produced some promising, if inconclusive, findings in regards to student outcomes” (p. 30). Available research on academic and intellectual development, social and personal development, and political efficacy and participation is discussed. Program evaluations have documented students’ increased knowledge about the communities they served and increased self esteem. In regard to the political outcome category, however, no consistent patterns seem to emerge. Wade hypothesizes that programs focused on political issues or local government involvement may be more likely than other types of programs to lead to increased political efficacy. My alternative hypothesis is that civic action projects that emerge from a study of public policy issues might be more effective in increasing political efficacy than community service separated from a study of the related public policy issue. I hope that future researchers will shed light on this question.

Chapters 2 through 7 work like a very thorough “how to do it” manual, providing step by step details for carrying out effective service learning. Wade illustrates her points with numerous examples from successful programs across the country. In chapters on preparation, collaboration, meaningful service, curriculum integration, reflection, and building support for service learning, rich details provide useful guidance and inspiration for individuals who are thinking about or are in the beginning stages of implementing service-learning projects. Written for use in college service-learning classes, public school staff development programs, and informal groups of service learning practitioners, these chapters use a workbook format. They address frequently asked questions and they conclude with “challenge activities,” such as:

Design a reflection plan for a middle school service-learning program that involves forty seventh- and eighth-grade students working once a week for two hours with chil-

dren in a homeless shelter. The students service-learning activity is part of their social studies class.... (p. 112)

As I noted earlier, Part 2 contains chapters written by practitioners who have worked with service-learning programs in diverse settings at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. The authors of the chapters in this section address the developmental needs of students of a particular age range and the structure of schooling for that level. Each chapter concludes with an insightful list of challenges to effective practice. Part 3, entitled *Voices from the Field*, captures much of the excitement of participants in successful programs. Authors representing different roles, write "My Story" accounts from their particular vantage points. The stories of a teacher on a Pueblo, a high school student, and a parent capture unique views that complement nicely those of administrators, program coordinators, and staff development personnel.

Part 4 on the future of service learning includes one chapter on pre-service teacher education that I found especially interesting, and which I believe will be of primary interest to readers of *TRSE*. Wade identifies four rationales for using community service-learning in teacher education: (1) to promote reflection in teacher education; (2) to connect with reforms such as authentic assessment and integrated teaching; (3) to prepare teachers to address the needs of diverse students and communities in our multicultural society by creating a climate of caring in schools; and (4) to help beginning teachers see themselves in an array of roles from counselor to community liaison and moral leader for their students. Options are discussed for infusing service learning into regular program components such as foundation courses, social studies methods, practica, and student teaching. Wade's comments on her own early efforts to implement service learning were especially interesting to me. I liked the ideas of beginning by integrating information about service learning into existing courses such as social studies methods, giving future teachers opportunities to assist teachers and K-12 students with service-learning projects, and asking pre-service teachers to undertake a project in which they "make a difference."

In the concluding chapter, Wade identifies a yet unmet challenge of community service learning. She notes, "there are too few service-learning programs that address the larger structural issues that create needs for service in the first place" (p. 332). In Chapter 8, Battistoni alludes to a similar concern. He notes, "some see service as an antidote to politics rather than a method of learning how to participate politically as a citizen" (p. 133). Service learning may be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to prepare citizens for democracy. I believe young

people need to investigate public policy alternatives, make decisions in light of likely outcomes and related values, and be encouraged to engage (voluntarily, of course) in civic action. Whether their action takes the form of writing "letters to the editor" of a local newspaper, presenting petitions to boards of decision makers, or getting involved in a political campaign, students should be helped to see the connection between the political process and conditions in the community. Recently, I heard former senator Bill Bradley appeal to a conference of university students by saying that if they chose not to vote or otherwise become politically involved he hoped they would at least volunteer in their community. I was disappointed that this longtime public servant did not remind the young adults of the important need to become politically engaged in order to enhance life in communities.

Finally, readers should be warned that little in *Community Service-Learning* speaks to the global community. If future citizens are to "think globally and act locally," they will need help seeing connections between their local community and wider global issues. Certainly, some students do engage in projects that are part of environmental, peace and security, and human rights issues that transcend national borders. However, they are not likely to see the global connection unless educators deliberately help them learn about communities around the world facing similar challenges and unless students are taught about international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens that are working on such issues.

In a related vein, I hope that a future article by Wade or others will explore how students and educators outside of the United States think about service to the community and the possible connection to democratic education. I have met students in Germany who individually volunteer to work in centers for refugees and I have seen student councils in England and Denmark that sponsor fund raisers for selected charities. I have seen schools in other countries that sponsor service clubs, similar to those in the United States, and I have seen school sponsored service award programs. However, in countries with greater expectations for government supported social programs and in cultures in which families bear the responsibility for most social welfare, or in societies with less of a tradition of volunteerism or civic education in schools than in the United States, community service learning is likely to be viewed quite differently. The notion of deliberately integrating service into the academic program of public schools, in the hope of better preparing youth for their role as citizens in democratic societies is as likely to vary across national contexts as are other aspects of civic education.

In summary, Rahima Wade and her colleagues have written a thoughtful and helpful book that will inspire many to undertake service learning. Their book also poses important challenges to scholars

concerned with theory and research in social education, as well as to teachers and other practitioners.

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Theory and Research in Social Education is designed to stimulate and communicate systematic research and thinking in social education. Its purpose is to foster the creation and exchange of ideas and research findings that will expand knowledge and understanding of the purposes, conditions, and effects of schooling and education about society and social relations. Manuscripts reporting conceptual or empirical studies of social education are welcomed.

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